

Kevin Solway & David Quinn's
**THE THINKING MAN'S
MINEFIELD**

2001-2013

VOLUME II

*For those magnificent individuals who
seek the eternal.*

*Welcome to The Thinking Man's Minefield (which
doesn't exclude masculine women). If you are interest-
ed in thinking then I am happy to tell you that you
have stumbled on a gold mine!*

Contents

Letters Between Enemies	1
The Hour of Judgement	131
The Atheist Archives	333
Miscellaneous Bits and Pieces	415
Misogyny Unlimited	625
Notes	769

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

COLLECTED LETTERS 1988 - 1992

Foreword

This is a collection of the letters exchanged between David Quinn and myself during the period from 1988 to 1992. They represent a record of our struggles to live a philosophic life, along with a good deal of philosophy. We feel that if others can find some inspiration from what we have written in these letters then it is our duty to make them publicly available. This foreword ends with a short extract from Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

- Kevin Solway & David Quinn

"Of The Friend"

From *Thus Spake Zarathustra* by Friedrich Nietzsche

"One is always one too many around me" - thus speaks the hermit. "Always once one - in the long run that makes two!"

I and Me are always too earnestly in conversation with one another: how could it be endured, if there were not a friend?

For the hermits there are too many depths. That is why they long so much for a friend and for his heights.

Our faith in others betrays wherein we would dearly like to have faith in ourselves.

Our longing for a friend is our betrayer.

And often with our love we only want to leap over envy. And often we attack and make an enemy in order to conceal that we are vulnerable to attack.

"At least be my enemy!" - thus speaks the true reverence, that does not venture to ask for friendship.

If you want a friend, you must also be willing to wage war for him: and to wage war, you must be capable of being an enemy.

You should honour even the enemy in your friend. Can you go near to your friend without going over to him?

In your friend you should possess your best enemy. Your heart should feel closest to him when you oppose him.

Do you wish to go naked before your friend? Is it in honour of your friend that you show yourself to him as you are? But he wishes you to the Devil for it!

He who makes no secret of himself excites anger in others: that is how much reason you

have to fear nakedness! If you were gods you could then be ashamed of your clothes!

You cannot adorn yourself too well for your friend: for you should be to him an arrow and a longing for the Superman.

Have you ever watched your friend asleep - to discover what he looked like? Yet your friend's face is something else beside.

It is your own face, in a rough and imperfect mirror.

Have you ever watched your friend asleep? Were you not startled to see what he looked like? O my friend, man is something that must be overcome.

The friend should be a master in conjecture and in keeping silence: you must not want to see everything. Your dream should tell you what your friend does when awake.

May your pity be your conjecture: that you may first know if your friend wants pity.

Perhaps what he loves in you is the undimmed eye and the glance of eternity.

Let your pity for your friend conceal itself under a hard shell; you should break a tooth biting upon it. Thus it will have a delicacy and a sweetness.

Are you pure air and solitude and bread and medicine to your friend? Many a one cannot deliver himself from his own chains and yet he is his friend's deliverer.

Are you a slave? If so, you cannot be a friend. Are you a tyrant? If so, you cannot have friends.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

In woman, a slave and a tyrant have all too long been concealed. For that reason, woman is not yet capable of friendship: she knows only love.

In a woman's love is injustice and blindness towards all that she does not love. And in the enlightened love of a woman, too, there is still the unexpected attack and lightning and night, along with the light.

Woman is not yet capable of friendship: women are still cats and birds. Or, at best, cows.

Woman is not yet capable of friendship. But tell me, you men, which of you is yet capable of friendship?

Oh your poverty, you men, and your avarice of soul! As much as you give to your friend I will give even to my enemy, and will not have grown poorer in doing so.

There is comradeship: may there be friendship!

- Thus spake Zarathustra

21 January 1988

From: David Quinn
1 Godfrey st
Toowoomba 4350

Dear Kevin

The sounds of suburbia greet my ears - for I no longer live at Tallwood, but in Toowoomba. Tracey and I live in the upper class section where there are beautiful European trees growing out of the road, embracing comfortable old houses. Extreme weather governs the place ranging from misty storms to green sunlight.

I write to tell you this plus to obtain Trevor's address. A suggestion has popped into my mind that may be of some use to him, if he continues with his plans of quitting and thinking. I think the emptiness and restlessness that he will feel upon leaving his job can be at least lessened if he adopts a set routine. That is, he should work out a strict discipline to fill the day including thinking, reading, exercise, eating periods etc. His main effort, in the beginning, should be to stick to this routine above all else, even at the expense of his thinking. For when he is adapted to it he will find everything easier. Also I would even suggest that he should insert formal meditation periods into his program, complete with the correct posture and the works.

By practicing sitting absolutely still and concentrating on the infinite for half an hour every day, he will not only improve his concentrative and meditative powers, but he will overcome his restlessness quickly. Trevor has been ruled by routine for the last several years and so I think it wise for him to adopt a similar strategy for the months ahead.

My own thoughts are still on this problem of awareness. I feel that reality is ultimately beyond awareness, for who exists that can be aware?, yet a stone cannot realize its true nature because of its lack of awareness, among

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

other things. Through the concept of cause and effect I am understanding the world more and more clearly every day. I can also see that cause and effect is merely a concept, that the history of the world does not exist except in our memories which ultimately are electronic impulses. Now, cause and effect applies to the physical world, however, this physical world is ultimately immaterial for it is projected out by the brain. But since the brain is part of the physical world it too must be a projection, that is, immaterial. "Immaterial" is also just a concept, that the world is as it is, that calling it physical or non-physical or neither doesn't change it. I am not making sense!

Let me put the problem another way: I was born into this world and ever since, I have received input through the senses concerning this world. Consequently, I assume that other people exist, that the past once existed, that a tremendous amount of activity occurs outside my field of awareness. This page, I assume, was created by humans out of wood. I assume that this occurred even though I was never aware of it. But on the other hand, I feel that events that do not occur in my consciousness really do not exist, that whatever information enters through my senses is the only reality, that, although I assume there are starving people in Ethiopia, they really don't exist until I become aware of them. I am not viewing things from an egotistical point of view, I can really see that this person called David just doesn't exist. I know that I am God. I feel that if I truly believe that other people are real, that their suffering is real, then I am losing faith in the Father.

Therefore, you see, awareness is the key. Brunton compares the waking state with the dream state, saying that ultimately both are made from the same stuff. So I study dreams, and see how nothing exists unless it enters my field of awareness, and apply this to waking life. I look at evolution and see how we've developed. I see that the way I see the world around me is dependent upon the way my brain has developed plus conditioning. But then I see that these are just thoughts. So awareness is the basis of everything.

I sort of know the answer to this problem but clarity keeps escaping me.¹

I look forward to your reply.
David

24 January 1988

From: Kevin Solway
2/117 Macquarie st
St Lucia Qld 4067

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Dear Dave,

Toowoomba sounds the ideal place; far enough away, and practically close enough. What is the rent like?

I thought your advice for Trevor was good, I saw him yesterday and showed him your letter. I think he gained some encouragement, though he still seems in two minds. His job simply offers him too much security, too much money, too many women, too much success, too much future, too many distractions. I am sure he would appreciate you writing to him. I think a part of his fear is that he will be seen to be following me if he gives up his job for a philosophic life. So some encouragement from a different source would probably have some effect.

I thoroughly agree that you cannot jump straight into Faith immediately. A daily routine, an egotistical routine, as long as it is ultimately directed towards Truth, is a necessity until such time as your conviction and power of mind is strong enough. Such a routine will eventually destroy all routines.

My mind has been really crook these last few weeks. I think I have reached the dreaded "three year stage". This is the stage at which, after three years of thinking about the infinite, you become bored with it. Or rather, your ego does. It no longer excites, and you can't get enthusiastic about it, firstly because you know too much to get excited, and secondly because even though you know the Truth you find it difficult to practice. After three years of failing to have good Faith it is easy to lose confidence, and to lose conviction. You may wake in the morning determined to centre your mind upon God alone, then you walk out onto the street and find yourself being captivated by a girls legs. What a joke! How weak I must be! When this happens again and again you begin to fear failure, or at least your ego does. You sometimes choose not to think of God, so that you cannot be distracted from Him by a pair of legs and then feel foolish. You can't lose if you don't try.

But of course, it is my ego that says all this, after three years of being abused by reason. Three years is nothing considering the deluded way I have been brought up in this society. "How should ye rise high, if your fathers wills rise not with you?" "Be not virtuous beyond your powers! And ask not of yourselves improbabilities".

All patience and impatience comes from the ego. Sometimes one must step down from an overly high relationship to God, and settle at a lower level for a while. And later on, begin again where you left off.

I have tried to live without any routine, without excitement, motivation, positive thinking and joy. It worked for a while, but when it stops working you're in trouble. The ego then takes over and you become overrun with

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

distractions - unhelpful distractions, rather than helpful ones. It is hard to step down to a lower level relationship with God, to routine, because you know better and have a conscience about it. But with God's permission, and this alone, you must take a rest and regain your energy. Otherwise you will be trying to maintain a pace you cannot live with, and you will soon deteriorate. You must tell a few lies to yourself for a while, with God's permission, to give the soul another chance to regroup and push forwards again at a later date. The lie of having a lower level relationship with God is less of a lie than trying to maintain a high level relationship that is beyond one's powers.

So, I'm going to adopt more of a routine for a while; writing, reading, walking and exercising, until I feel better. You really must feel like a lion in your motivation. Without this power nothing is achieved. With a normal motivation delusions can linger and take hold, but with a lion-like motivation they are destroyed in an instant, with no second thoughts.

Your discussion of awareness was very clear. Other names for it could also be "Mind", or Brunton's "Thought", or "Consciousness". There is no self who has Mind, nor is Mind possessed by anything, nor is Mind perceived by anyone. It just is - nothing.

Dreams and the wakeful state compare on many levels. Dreams appear to be real, but are merely creations of the mind. Similarly, wakeful experience appears real, but again is only a creation of the mind. Both are really dreams. We can never wake up from the dreams because we have physically evolved to have them. However, we can wake up from the dream that these dreams are not dreams.

Yes, awareness is the basis of everything. But as you say, it is just electrical impulses in the brain - it is nothing. So nothing is the basis of everything, which is everything!

You say that clarity escapes you. This is the age old problem. You seem to have a good intellectual understanding of it, but there has yet to be a leap of Faith. You have already made many of these to come this far, but the next one is important, as it brings a clarity you can never forget. It is a life-affirming clarity that dispels all doubts and alternate wills. It is the nothing that is everything. It is not the understanding of it, nor the accurate mental picture of it, but the experience of it.

This is no big deal. It happens effortlessly when the time comes - just as, say, Pat Cash wins Wimbledon once he has enough experience. It is a quantum leap, but it has to be made gradually. It only comes about through this lion-like confidence I was talking about, which is a kind of killer instinct. It is a mind that says "I am sure this is all nothing. I am absolutely certain. I am completely sure, so I will be Truthful NOW, and STOP! all this building ...".

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

We build on top of what is already perfect, corrupting it. We must put the builder to rest.²

All the best
Kevin

February, 1988

From: David Quinn
1 Godfrey st
Toowoomba 4350

Dear Kevin,

Yes, the builder must rest. The builder, who remains inconspicuous in the background, trying to mould me according to its idea of perfection. It obtains this idea of perfection from books, experience, friends, society and so on – all of which is contradictory. Thus we get the absurd situation where the idea (of perfection) changes with time, according to the environment. And me, who has little faith, who forgets that perfection or imperfection does not exist, allows the builder to continue to try and change me so that in the future I will be a Buddha! I must let go of everything - even my loftiest thoughts and memories of the infinite. This is not easy for one feels one is betraying God by not directing thought towards Him. But if I desire realization then that is my ego desiring, which merely perpetuates the illusion. Faith, then, is seeing there is nothing to strive for in any way for all is perfect. Faith is to live each moment totally without motive, or purpose, not caring for enlightenment. But then, isn't trying to live without purpose merely a disguise hiding the desire for realization? So, the trick is to live without trying anything at all – living effortlessly.

I have been trying to sort out the problem before me, that is, should I keep thinking of the infinite and all that goes with it? or should I let all that go and live fully each moment? I feel more comfortable with the former, for when I am thinking well I receive unmistakable hints from the infinite and I also get "intuitive" flashes of insight into the various fundamental problems of psychology. However, I can foresee the limitations of this path. I can only go so far before coming up against an impenetrable barrier. I see that the builder must be put to rest and to do so requires the "complete relinquishment". I guess it is my lack of faith that gives rise to doubts about this latter path and that if I decide to abandon all my "progress" I fear I could lose God forever.

This following statement of Jesus haunts me: "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door". Letting go seems to be the complete oppo-

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

site! But there are other factors which indicate to me that letting go is the right "step" to take. One is the fact, through reading some science and philosophy books, I see that many very intelligent people who continually think about cause and effect and evolution, or the limitations of reason, or the psychology of fear, have no clue whatsoever of the infinite. I find this astonishing and wonder why I have come in contact with it. I read one philosophers article who impressed me with the clarity of his thinking dealing with nihilism, the limitations of reason etc, but ended it with (in essence) "Well, since there is not certainty in anything, I like to believe that something transcendent does exist". He obviously has had no experience of the infinite even though he, no doubt, thinks about deep problems quite a lot. The second factor is that I have read that many people who are very hungry for realization become choked with their own desire which prevents them from realizing. Thirdly, I look back at my own experiences and see that they have all occurred when I wasn't trying, at times when I couldn't have cared less about anything. Fourthly, I see in drug experiences that their big attraction is that they allow you to live fully in the present moment, that past and future are seen clearly for what they are - ideas.

But the biggest factor is the reasoning behind letting go. By trying to change me, I am trying to change what is already perfect. I am trying to change according to values picked up in the past. These values change with time and so the futility of it all is obvious. By being completely aware of each moment I accept my faults without resistance. Thus I obtain a quiet, relaxed mind in which spontaneity is achieved.

You, no doubt, have experienced this dilemma I'm going through and can perhaps shed some light on the matter.

Toowoomba is proving to be a nice place. It shall be very cold in winter with plenty of fog. Rent seems to be a little cheaper than Brisbane. Tracey and I were searching for flats and houses under ninety dollars per week and nearly all we saw were dingy. However, we were fortunate to obtain a nice little brick flat for seventy five dollars per week (with a fire place!). I have been trying to find work but, fortunately or unfortunately work prospects are poor here. I have been rather distracted myself since moving here. We hired a T.V for a month and have been watching lots of videos. Television is too nauseating for words. I haven't written to Trevor yet. What's he doing? If he is still deliberating perhaps I will write, but it seems rather pre-tentious. Anyway, I look forward to your reply.³

David

6 March 1988

From: Kevin Solway

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

2/117 Macquarie st
St Lucia
Qld 4067

Dear David,

Your letter brought up some interesting points. You pose the question: "Should I keep thinking of the infinite and all that goes with it? Or should I let all that go and live fully in the moment?".

The former path holds many problems, interesting problems, with much scope for achievement - like understanding psychology (past and future lives). But it doesn't escape suffering as well as living in the moment does, which seems much more powerful and natural. This question is one of the most important, if not the most important question in all spiritual life.

I tackle the problem as follows: If ever one has a "problem", like trying to understand why a person behaves as they do, then something is lacking – a solution, and one is therefore living in samsara, the cycle of duality. As soon as you solve one problem, and rejoice in your achievement, the sooner you are faced by another, more perplexing problem. It is a circular process, and you find yourself repeatedly trying to solve the same old puzzles. This is O.K for lower levels of the path, still in the intellectual sphere, but it must be abandoned eventually.

And here is where the danger arises, for in the abandoning of such problems one can so very easily abandon reason! The fact is, that problems are important, and have to be dealt with. And so, I say "First the Kingdom of God, then thinking". First attain direct experience of emptiness (a kind of experiencing the moment), then use that divine clarity of mind to turn over all the great problems of mankind.

This will not be easy, because the problems you will wish to consider will be problems deep in the human psyche, and your own! They will tend to arouse the ego again, and when it does arise one is again overcome with a plethora of problems.

The sage meditates on a thousand problems, for which he lacks an answer - but he desires no answer, needs no answer. He simply seeks answers. Kierkegaard says: I go fishing for a thousand monsters in the depths of my own soul.

The enjoyment of "the moment" can be experienced as a pleasure by the ego. It can so easily ignore all those monsters. And eventually one forgets that the monsters exist at all!

All this is not easy. Persevere!

Keep an eye on your mind. Is the experience merely one of the heavenly god realms, or is it that of God? It is not difficult to attain the heavens through concentration or by accident, but such powerful experiences are

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

dangerous without wisdom, as the ego will only gain strength through the encouragement.

Your story of the philosopher who resorts to superstition when it comes to the crunch is a familiar one to me. Over the years people build-up a solid base of security for the ego, through admirable planning ahead, courage, perseverance, and so on. People then sit inside the fortress they have created and think proud and comfortable thoughts. Thinking of how wretched their condition would be without all their securities helps to increase their satisfaction and contentedness - making them more thankful for what they've got. They would never even consider giving-up all what they have worked so hard for.

And it all comes down to age. Someone less than about 25 hasn't had time to build-up a lot of securities. They are not so content, not so scared of change, and have the potential of taking on the burden of Truth.

I was talking to an intelligent person at Chenrezig last week. He is about 28, living in a de facto relationship, and is very good with electronics and computers. He is content. He easily has the brains to understand the infinite conceptually, but simply doesn't want to think about it too much! He shows me that he understands one to two things about the infinite, but only one or two things, not thousands. His thinking is very narrow, which it has to be if he is to preserve his ego. He doesn't follow up all the logical consequences of the infinite being Truth. For example, he sees clearly how all things have neither a beginning nor an end, but he cannot understand why there is no life nor death, and he cannot understand why we have no need of attachments. He simply selects what he wants, and rejects what doesn't seem to suit his purposes.

Even though he is more rational than most, he is not really on a spiritual path, having reached a dead-end. His reasoning has led him to contentedness and stagnation, rather than to a burning desire for the Truth. His aim in life is not to discover Truth, but to avoid pain. Or rather, he has chosen to rely on attachments other than reason to avoid pain.

A spiritual path is where one initially places all one's faith in reason. But, at his age, he feels he has too much to lose. When you talk with him he is bright and enthusiastic, but when you reach a certain point he simply turns off, starts mumbling, changing the subject, looking away and day-dreaming. There is nothing you can do for these people, and even these are much more rational than most.

Such people have no potential, they are not in the human realm. Better is a person of less developed rationality, but with a desire for truth.

Now I'll leave you with a couple of things to ponder. Firstly, and you'll come up against this again and again, is the argument for the existence of God. I'll write the problem, let you think about it, and then write my comments at the end of the letter:

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

All things must have causes - true. Now imagine the whole of Nature as a sphere. As it is a thing, then it must have been caused. The only thing that could have caused it would have to be other than Nature ... God. This is called the "necessary being" argument, it being necessary for Nature to have been caused, therefore a God is necessary. What do you make of this?

The second thing to ponder concerns genetics. Our purpose in life is the continuation of the genetic line - true? Then what if at some future date we replace some of our genetic material with that from another species? This would still be continuation of the genetic line, but rather than a small change being made to our genes, as in mutation, there would be a large change. Then what if we replaced a very large amount of our genetic material with that of another species? Surely this would mean the end of the genetic line!

So then, what is the purpose of preserving the genetic line? Such a "line" doesn't really exist - our purpose would be irrational!

Thoughts on the existence of God: The necessary being argument has a fundamental flaw. Sure, our experience and inductive reasoning tells us that all things must have causes - but only those things within Nature, within the dualistic world of our experience. This is a law, but there is no such law saying that Nature must be caused, which is not a thing and cannot be a subject of our dualistic thinking about cause and effect.

In reality, Nature is neither caused nor not caused. Nature itself is the only "necessary being", as it is the root cause of all things within Nature (which are itself). It is a necessary being, because Truth is necessary.

Thoughts on genetics: Our definition of "species" (as identified by the genetic code) has to break down at some point, as it is only a concept, meant for practical use only. It cannot stand up to reality itself. Perhaps a more practical definition of species would be "all lifeforms in the universe capable of self-awareness, reasoning and knowledge". This definition would enable us to completely change our physical bodies (and genetic code), but retain our culture, wisdom etc. The body, and hence the genetic material, being only a tool for our use.

However, for present purposes, the former definition and "purpose to life" may be sufficient, it being one stage in spiritual development. But as knowledge grows then one concept seems more reasonable than another. Then, when we slice all false thoughts off the top of our brain, and observe the thing which is left, an imprint, it will tell us different things, and give us a different purpose.

A spiritual man's purpose may change, as he comes to see the Truth more and more clearly.

What do you think of all that?

By the way, I have been giving more thought to Trevor. I now think that he needs no help at all. He knows what he should do, he just doesn't

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

want to do it! I don't think he's really deliberating, he just does what his mind tells him. He really has to get used to making these big decisions by himself, as it will stand him in good stead later on.

P.S How is Tracey progressing in her thinking.⁴

Bye for now
Kevin

14 July 1988

From: Kevin Solway
2/117 Macquarie st
St Lucia 4067

Dear Dave,

Are you still in Toowoomba? Have you found a job yet? I guess the statistics say you will find a job after having completed the hospitality course.

I am still plodding along. Life is not becoming any easier. In fact it seems to be becoming harder the more I realize that it won't be getting easier for a very long while - if ever (in this life).

A few years ago, when I was about twenty four I had dreams that by the time I was thirty I would have gone through the worst of it. Now I realize that thirty is only the beginning. The older you get, and the more you think, the more you see how your deluded past sticks with you and exists within you. I want to grow old and wise, leaving my past behind me; but Nature doesn't work like that. Because I don't let myself get addicted to adult attachments I find that my old childish one's continue. For example, while most people my age are absorbed in their work and their families I find myself being tempted by sport or the techno wiz-bang of computers. It is a horrible feeling, like you're caught in a time loop where you're doomed to continually repeat yourself. It is like having a continuous and repetitive dream, which you know is a dream, but from which you cannot awake.

However, I'm sure I'm improving overall. My reaction to most worldly things is now a complete and automatic revulsion, no matter what company I'm in. Years ago I would have had to consider it first - before being revolted.

Being revolted at all things in the world, all pleasures, is a very important strength. If you find you're not revolted, then you've been taken-in by it all, and you've died. Being revolted is by no means the answer, but from this standpoint at least you will look for Truth. And if you look for Truth

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

you are bound to find it. But if you get taken-in by the world then your mind becomes dead, and Truth will be beyond reach.

Being taken-in by the world feels to me like I've been dragged out of my mind, out through the senses, and I can't get back in again. I get trapped out in the world, where I get tossed about, by memories, hopes, desires, fears, and life becomes timeless. That's the problem, I'd much rather I experienced the true passage of time, seeing myself grow older at each moment, from the true vantage point within my own mind. From here, behind the eyes, I can look out and see everything in its place, untouched by anything. From here I even observe memories, and they will have no power over me.

But before you know it your self has donned wings and flown out the doors of the senses where you cannot catch it again. Once it is finally back under wraps it has to be continually alert of itself, and that it is not taken-in or absorbed by anything again for even a moment. It must reject everything, all love, beauty, ugliness, all tiredness, boredom, happiness, all thought of success or failure.

I don't ever think my life will become easy, not if I put honest pressure on myself and remain uncompromising. Even if I develop my mind only a little, I can continue the process in future lives. That is, other people will learn from my life, no matter how little they learn. Every action has an effect and there are no exceptions.

My ego had unrealistic hopes for me, perhaps thinking that by the time I'm sixty I might be a recognized sage, and will be largely beyond desire, and supported by students. My, how the ego can dream! The Truth is, only a sage can recognize a sage. So if I ever become a great sage virtually no one in the world would be able to truly recognize me. What is more, I wouldn't be able to accept followers anyway, not if they have only blind faith in my wisdom, as they certainly wouldn't be able to recognize wisdom themselves. Too many recognized "sages" have compromised along the way, if not at the very beginning, and are therefore not sages at all. They live their lifestyle, with all their followers, with the aim of making their own lives more comfortable, and so that their own weaknesses will never come to the surface, and come to light.

Nietzsche says "Be not virtuous beyond your powers, and ask not of yourselves improbabilities! Walk in the footsteps of your fathers virtue! How should ye rise high, if your fathers wills rise not with you?"

Our "fathers" have not given us much of a start. In my life I have never personally known a spiritual person. However, we are fathers to others, and they may well rise higher than us.

I can hear a voice in my ear saying "Don't be so negative, be positive, think about how much you have achieved, that is far more than others have ever dreamed of!" ... And it had an American accent.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

I'd much rather be realistic. Achieving "far more" than others is such a low level of achievement it is nothing to rejoice about. But it is all I can realistically do, which is neither great nor small nor middling. It is nothing, and is everything.⁵

Kevin

P.S If you're still in Toowoomba and wouldn't mind having me for a day or two let me know what days are O.K.

20 July 1988

From: David Quinn
1 Godfrey St,
Toowoomba 4350

Dear Kevin,

Thanks for your letter. It touched on many points that I can relate to. For I am also in a low period; truly am I in the hells. I am beginning to realize more and more what it requires to lead a spiritual life and the idea is scary. After a year of intense thinking and making great ground, intellectually at least, I am in a period of backlash. My ego is rebelling and at the moment I don't have the strength to fight. I seemed to have lost all enthusiasm, all faith in the path, in truth. The hospitality course is overwhelming me. I have begun smoking again and my mind is truly floundering on the surface of things. I hate society, hate the emptiness and falsity of most human relations, hate kidding myself but my desire for comfort is very powerful and blanks out all those things. And so I am in limbo. The path that society takes with their ambitions, and their petty trivia revolts me to the core of my being. I have no ambitions whatsoever. Succeeding in this world would make me nauseous. The alternative is the spiritual life. In principle, that is what I want to do. I have come in contact with the truth and I love it. I really feel I have potential in it and I have the mind for it. But my one obstacle is my upbringing - an upbringing of comfort, of being sheltered from life's hard realities. I know nothing of pain, of coldness, of true loneliness. When I have periods, where I am thinking well, and get hints of Emptiness, of the game of life, I can't seem to advance further as my concentration breaks, and I just have to distract myself. I know I can overcome that, but I just don't have any time doing this fucking course!

My cluttered life is preventing me in progressing in thought. I feel: why should I bother to think when I am not doing what needs to be done - ie giving up attachments. I see clearly that it is action that counts in spiritual-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ity. Having wonderful thoughts of emptiness is virtually useless if you don't accompany that with the process of emptying yourself. So my mind is dying. I am becoming a zombie - one who hates attachments and hates emptiness.

I think the only way to search for truth is in desperation. You have to feel the need to depend on God only, and in this way you will search with intensity. But if you are comfortable you depend instead on the attachments that give you this comfort and so you forget about God. But do I have the strength to live in physical and mental discomfort? Do I have the faith required? I do have a certain strength but I feel it only exists in bursts. Can I live in emptiness year in and year out? This is my dilemma.

You say that only a sage can recognize a sage. This may be so but sensitive people can glimpse the nature of one who is somewhat more advanced. When I am in your company I feel the presence of emptiness very strongly. I recognize the fact that you are a special breed of person, a person who is on a completely different level to everyone else I've ever met. I realize the timelessness of your endeavour, that you are no different whatsoever to Jesus, Kierkegaard, and many others who have lived a spiritual life. It is as if society and everyone in it is travelling in one direction and these rare people are proceeding in the opposite direction. So I question your statement about students being able to follow a teachers wisdom on blind faith only.

I can really relate to Kierkegaard's statement about: as you advance no-one but no-one understands you and that is the beginning of true loneliness. Who can possibly begin to understand the struggles of a spiritual man? To all else he is either a chronic depressant or a useless dreamer.

My wish is to live a simple life dedicated to truth, but can I live a completely empty existence? Until I have the concentration some distractions are going to be necessary.

But why are you worrying about being recognized or not? Is this the ego considering future security? You know these are deluded thoughts so why bother with them?

I question my own motives. My own search is not pure. Am I searching for reality for its own sake, because I know my own self is reality, or is it just another one of my schemes for pleasure and comfort? Most probably a mixture of both. For the infinite reality is not something you wish to attain in order to have a good time, is it? There is no reason whatsoever to search for truth - it just has to be done. It is one of your powers as it were. It is the soul (which seems to be yourself but then isn't) - pleasing God.

Isn't your Tibetan book a strange one. Never have I seen so much good stuff and so much rubbish mixed into one package. It has excellent sections on death awareness and non-existence of self, but then tells you to prepare yourself for emptiness by doing 35 Buddhas a day!

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

Please feel free to come up. We have a mattress here. A week-end is probably more suitable but weekdays are fine also - I will not be at home during the weekdays being the only problem with that. Greg may be visiting us this weekend so if you decide on this weekend one of you will sleep on the floor.⁶

See you soon
David

16 August 1988

From: Kevin Solway
2/117 Macquarie st
St Lucia 4067

Dear David,

I'd like to come up on the week-end of the 27th if that's O.K with you. Where are you working now? Will it be possible for you to pick me up if you are going through Brisbane? If I haven't heard from you by then I'll assume it's O.K for me to come up, and I'll make my own way, probably arriving late afternoon.

I've broken through a dull period and my mind has been clear and bright now for a few weeks. Perseverance pays off! The Truth can bring so much suffering, but O the joy it brings as well! Only with faith can one break through the Barrier. It is said: going forward seems like retreat, the easy way seems hard, the bright path seems dim, a wealth of Virtue seems inadequate, great talents ripen late.

I'm sure there is nothing really important left that you can learn from me, but I can still implore you to never forget all the people who depend on you to continue to develop your wisdom so that you can teach them. There are people out there, a few, in the human realm. But they are young, and will not remain in the human realm for long. Once they fall into the animal realms they will have no hope of escaping.

It is essential to contact those people before it is too late, and your wisdom must be so bright as to instantly melt their ego and dissipate all their doubts the moment they see you.

Those people may never meet me, or any other person of wisdom, and meeting that person may be all they need to just tip them over the brink – and the rest they can do for themselves.

It is far easier to live a truly spiritual life than to partake of this world. Living a spiritual life you can sleep all your hours away and be totally

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

carefree, but when you live in this world you have to take part in all the games and responsibilities. Is this not madness?

Right now all I can do is just avoid making clouds - clouds that will block the sun and take its light from me. I can't keep it up forever, but even clouds dissipate under the warmth of the sun's rays.⁷

Yours,
Kevin

15 June 1989

From: David Quinn
20 Glebe st,
Glebe,
Hobart 7000

Hello Kevin!

Glebe, Glebe, I'm living in Glebe! The train didn't derail, The ship didn't sink, The bus didn't crash, And I didn't get mugged in Melbourne!

Melbourne is very threatening. There is lots of tension. People are more closed-up. Crime is high. Peoples' irrationality is stretched to its limits. Truly, it must be what life is like in an American city.

In Melbourne I met one of Samantha's academic friends, David. He is one of those academics who will be successful in life. A biologist, he already has reputation - assisted with the filming of "Life on Earth" and "The living planet", articles in the "National Geographic", and swims easily among the big names of biology. Already, he has perfected the airs and pompousness of academia.

I asked him what his concept of evolution was. Is it a random or non-random process?

Dutifully, he cited the scientific spiel, saying that natural selection was essentially non-random whereas genetic mutation was random! And so we had an interesting discussion about natural selection. He maintained that natural selection and genetic mutation were independent of each other! Impossible! said I. The formation of the genes, that is, the coming together of the sperm and the ovary depended on millions of things. For one thing, the animal has to survive in its environment long enough to reproduce. And when you look at all the millions of sperm that are potential mates, and that perhaps only a handful are capable of major genetic change, you will see that a major factor in genetic mutation will be what particular sperm meets the ovary. And that in turn depends on the angle of the penis in the vagina, the thrust power of the male, the availability of males and females in a par-

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

ticular area, the distribution of hormones and other chemicals in bodies of the male and female, which, in turn, depends on the environment. And so on.

I was at a disadvantage here because he knew the details of genetic mutation far better than I, but I knew in principle that I was right. He seemed to accept my argument but then went on the say that I was dealing purely in semantics. Yes, said I, because it is the scientists who are fooled by words and concepts. Beautifully constructed theories are built on those concepts without thought to whether those concepts actually refer to something that exists or not. Genetic mutation, for example - how in the galaxy does a random process exist?

But he was very rigid in his thinking. His concepts are precious to him. He can't play with them, swap them around, add new meaning to them. He soon left as he felt the argument was going around in circles - which it was. Still, he proved to me that although biology was his field of work, he didn't have a clue about evolution.

When he left I told Samantha that he didn't have a clue about evolution. I said to her that my understanding of evolution was perfect, that I see clearly where he goes off the track. She was shocked, "You can't say that, that your understanding is perfect!" No, Sam, I can't say that - it would destroy the whole spirit of science.

Hobart is cold, quiet, and yes, isolated. Existence is dreamy here. Majestic snow-capped mountain, interesting architected buildings, blue river and bay - all conspire to give the place an enchanted fairy tale setting. It is all very European in feel. I haven't met anyone of interest yet but there is a Mahayana Buddhist club which meets regularly, which I'll soon attend.

Meanwhile I'm just quietly going my way. I live in an almost self-contained room in an old building which houses a dozen or so similar rooms. I live by myself and pay \$46 per week which includes electricity. Electricity is hydro thus fairly environmentally safe.

I've been working with a few ideas mainly in the fields of artificial intelligence and genetic engineering. I want to discuss them with you but I'll wait a bit more and present them in my next letter.

Included here are some of your material, and what! a reply from Miss Caroline Jones! I had a laugh at her letter. What did I do wrong for her to like the ideas so much? Or perhaps she is merely patronizing me! Perhaps you should move down to Sydney - and surprise her! The ideas I presented to her did not include your ideas on women or Christianity, but were strong enough to indicate your personality, namely someone totally unlike her usual guests. Perhaps the exuberance of her reply lies in her relief at the "logistics" of the situation?⁸

Hear from you soon,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David.

28 June 1989

From: Kevin Solway
4/69 Sandford st
St Lucia Q 4067

Good to hear from you. It sounds like an interesting experience you had with David the scientist.

Its quite incredible isn't it. Genetic mutation independent of natural selection indeed! I read your discussion with David out to my flatmate David, David. He was equally perturbed. He said, yes, that's all true, but where does it get you? He says you can't say that things are interdependent because its been mathematically proven that cause and effect doesn't exist. True enough I told him, you don't need to be a mathematician to prove that cause and effect/determinism is a fallacy. My point is that things are not interdependent also! Scientists desperately cling from one to the other, like a monkey grasping from one branch to another. They swing from causation to non-causation, not believing in either, and yet believing in both at the same time. I guess that's what people these days call "tolerance". And being unable to penetrate the illusory nature of the branch they are on, they cannot see the illusory nature of all such branches - all the opposites. Such creatures will never come down from the trees.

Someone said that people are the missing link between animals and humans. I think they were being too generous.

I didn't hold out much hope of getting on the Caroline Jones show, but you have to ask. As time goes by we'll make a mark - it's inevitable. As inevitable as fate. I must admit, "logistics" seemed a strange explanation. I thought that was to do with providing supplies to armies during battle! But the word also has something to do with "logic" - so she must have thought it was not logical to interview me.

I am still typing a few ideas out every now and then. Perhaps I will entitle the collection "Poison words from the heart". I enclose a few more writings of Kierkegaard, and a letter from Trevor, who seems to be making progress.

Kevin.

7 September 1989

From: David Quinn

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

Kevin - how are you going

I've been spending the last three months doing a bit of "soul-searching" myself. Being in Hobart here has given me the opportunity to examine my life closely, in order to see exactly what I want to do with it. Away from home and hatchery, away from the influences of you, Greg and Tracey etc - has enabled me to view my life from the outside to a degree.

It is so difficult to be honest with oneself - honesty leads one to very frightening places. The burning question is: Do I want to practice philosophy? Why do I want to go through all this suffering, when the lazy life of convention seems so attractive? Have I got the strength for philosophy? Do I have any sort of love of truth?

When I read Kierkegaard I get dizzy and gloomy when I compare my apparently incurable weaknesses with the loftiness of a life of truth. I have to say that Kierkegaard is not for me at this stage of my life. Although I love his genuineness, his picture of the true life only discourages me. It is one of my biggest weaknesses - that of despairing over my weaknesses. Nietzsche, on the other hand, resonates well with me in that he inspires me - I love his approach to things. One gets inspired to climb onto the bottom rung whereas Kierkegaard keeps me gaping at the sheer height of the ladder!

I doubt whether I have any sort of love of truth - I seem to have no passion. I can't seem to take myself seriously. I have seriously considered giving the whole thing up and running back to cover. Just recently I received a letter from Tracey imploring me to come back to her as she really loved me etc etc. I was in a very low point at the time, and I seriously entertained the prospect. But I can't. Philosophy has wounded me too deeply - I can't possibly take a love affair seriously any more. I can truly say, with Kierkegaard, that such things would only serve to increase my melancholy and depression.

I've also thought of alternative ways of life, for example, working for Greenpeace etc. But again, I can't. I just wouldn't be able to take it seriously enough.

I cannot escape philosophy - it has got me by the balls. But this does not mean I am progressing in it. There is no concerted effort in weeding out delusion here - more of a tense game played out in a sort of pressurized emptiness, which involves real difficulties in stringing three consecutive thoughts together.

But I know the path, the pathless path - at least an inkling of it.

I wonder if ever a day will go by when I won't entertain the thought of quitting. I think: why, this is madness! - all this effort for little return! I get tired of "glimpses", as if God is intent on getting his kicks in teasing me,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

who delights in watering my mouth with exotic smells, but never gives me something of substance.

It's as if everything about me is heavy, too heavy to breathe spiritual air.

There seems nothing extraordinary about me - I just don't have that mark of greatness, that I sense in you. So it seems silly for me to adopt your way of life and your values if I cannot live by them. Though I do feel that I am drifting further and further from mankind as I grow older, as my repulsion for convention grows stronger and stronger, and so I cannot rule out the "apostles life" as a possibility in the future. But for now, it would be absurd for me to even pretend that I am anywhere near it at present.

For example, I cannot rule out the possibility of some sort of relation with women in the future, though without doubt with 99% of women I don't want to get within ten feet of. Still, an absolute total rejection of woman would be too dreadful for me to contemplate - and here lies my lack of faith, for I know full well their detrimental effects upon the philosopher. There is still one type of woman that interests me, one that would be rare to meet, perhaps one that doesn't exist at all except in my imagination, one that is able to confront me on the emotional level (for it would be impossible for one to confront me on an intellectual level). Oh egotism! - at the root of it all is that desire for acceptance of the herd - life would somehow be more bearable in the knowledge that at least not all women (and hence men) view me with disgust. Yes, nothing would kindle passion more than the total rejection of woman. Oh but can I do it?

There is this giant desire to submit. My ego would like nothing more than to submit, whether it be into madness, or into comfort, or into woman, or whatever. One must have a strong nature not only to "see" the truth, but also to bear it as well.

I guess there is an analogy which can be drawn regarding my situation in life. In nature I've always wondered about the biologists assertion that a particular animal is perfectly suited to it's environment because of natural selection. Why should this be so? Surely, many of the animals are ill-suited to their environment, living very uncomfortable lives, but still managing to survive to pass on their genes. Especially when the environment changes animals become very uncomfortable with their lot until either they "evolve" better equipment or they become too uncomfortable to survive and they die out.

For example, when wolves were forced to move into the hotter climates of the desert, it would have been many generations before the necessary mutation of a thinner coat of hair started to appear. As a result, many generations of wolves would have suffered unbearably under the heat, many of them would have perished because of it.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

Similarly, for the evolution of man's mind to occur there must be pushes into unknown territory by "generations" whose equipment is not very useful for the task. This is what Nietzsche must mean in Zarathustra. My upbringing developed certain characteristics in me for the purpose of surviving in the conventional world, but then my environment changed - I've been forced into unknown territory with equipment ill-suited for the task. No doubt both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche realized this; that their lives were to be spent for the purpose of surviving as best they could in the new environment, so that eventually the mutations may occur, creating the conditions for the better-suited individuals to arise.

Thus, this is where I stand. For my own particular individuality, total perfection is the remotest of remote possibilities, given my mental equipment. The best I can do is to survive one moment at a time gradually edging out into the unknown, maybe perishing because of it, to help create the effects enabling an individual in the future to achieve perfection.

Of course, all this is fairly obvious - but there is a difference between understanding it and understanding it. In any case, may myself be victorious!

How's Trevor going? Are you in contact with him? I think I'll write to him but I have misplaced his letter - can you send me his address? He sounds quite down doesn't he - in a sort of no-man's land. He quit his job more out of guilt than a desire to explore truth - he hasn't encountered that invigorating enthusiasm yet, it seems to me. I wonder what it's like in Germany - hard to imagine from this desolate paradise called Tasmania where nothing happens except the newspapers. I like it here though - it suits my hyper-sensitivity.

Still going to Chenrezig and giving the smiles a shake with your "ugly face"?⁹

What have you been thinking lately?

Hope to hear from you soon,

Regards,

David.

10 September 1989

From: Kevin Solway
4/69 Sandford st
St Lucia Q 4067

Greetings,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

It sounds like your stay in Tasmania is doing you good, though I'm sure at times it doesn't feel like it. It is always difficult coming to terms with one's own limitations - and we all have them. Such is our karma; it's nothing to be unhappy about.

You may be right in saying I have a kind of passion that you find difficult to generate just now; but passion will only come of itself. I do not believe it can be whipped-up whenever one desires - one has to be pushed into it. Only when there is no alternative will you feel a strong passion for God and a overwhelming love of Truth. It is like being surrounded by a blazing bushfire, and then, bravely?, deciding to swim across the river to the other shore. You see, there is no real courage in this, only necessity.

You observed this fact yourself when you said that "nothing would kindle passion more than the total rejection of woman"; but more accurately, an allconsuming passion must arise for one to be able to reject women in the first place. And what is this passion? - nothing grand - it is just the passion to be dignified and to avoid hellish sufferings ... at least, dignified in one's own eyes if not in the eyes of others.

Believe me, the only reason I can reject women as completely as I do is because I know how much suffering they would cause me - just the fact that I would become a slave, and that I would lose my freedom of thought and action - my soul. I know full well that I could lay back in the loving arms of a woman for a day or two, and then my ideals would return to mock me.

You may remember the time I told you about an old girlfriend of mine in Perth. We had little in common, but I am sure we were totally compatible on an emotional basis. She could give me lee-way where she did not understand me intellectually, and I could give her lee-way where she did not understand me. We lived in separate worlds, yet were able to share on an emotional level.

So, I could get the benefit of the intellectual life, and have my emotional side satisfied too - right? Wrong! I found I was sacrificing some of my thought to make room for some warm emotional pleasures, and through these emotional pleasures, yes, love, a poison was being injected into my system. Hints of jealousy would make their way into my consciousness if I noticed her enjoying the company of another man. Could I stop her? Could I go on like this for the rest of my life? There are so many jokes about relationships, and we all laugh at them - was I going to be the brunt of all these jokes for the rest of my life? - I just couldn't do it.

So, my life may not be all that happy. A smile does not often come easily to my face. But for me, it is far better than the alternative. Here I have suffering, maybe a shortened life, but here I have freedom!

Think of your future lives! Stepping stones are we for greater players. Man without a woman suffers for this life, but is rewarded in eternity. Per-

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

haps you have not generated complete disgust with all womankind - what matter! You, and I, can just do our best. I have often thought that even if I were to get married, I wouldn't be doing anything wrong. I would have a weakness perhaps, but God gave me the weakness. You are the machine and God is the operator. You do as he makes you do. It is for this reason we should never be disgusted with our weaknesses, for we are not responsible.

Only last week I was feeling a bit down and needing a bit of emotional stroking. I thought of dear "Carolyn" in Perth, who loves me, whatever that means, and it made me feel better for a moment. I thought I'd sit down and jot her a line for the first time in several years. I started to write the letter but couldn't think of anything to say! I said that I was still alive, and was she, and not much more. I put the one page letter in an envelope, put a stamp on it, and promptly went to the river, ripped it up and threw it in the water. All I really wanted was the thought in my mind that someone loved me, namely a woman I could respect. 'Tis all illusion. To me the whole fantasy was like a T.V show, I knew it wasn't real, but I could enjoy it for 30 minutes.

So, I'm not perfect - God still plays his games with me. But he tells me other things also: what can be remembered eternally? Only one thing: to have suffered for the truth. So he makes me suffer. He makes me respect a woman and then he makes lose respect for all humanity, the girl included. How could He be so cruel? Such is his game.

We are like kites that God keeps on a string. He keeps us bound to the world despite all our attempts to break free. But then one breaks loose – and what joy there is watching it!¹⁰

P.S

Perhaps you should go back to Tracey. Then at least you will know for sure one way or the other.

23 September 1989

From: Kevin Solway
4/69 Sandford st
St Lucia Q 4067

Hello again,

A few thoughts occurred to me recently that I thought might interest you. I think the greatest barrier is as you say in last letter "despair". Enlightenment is so high, and we are so low. I am not immune to such thinking myself, but it really is making hard work of it all. If you think of your-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

self as lacking anything to begin with, then you are bound to despair. You mention that you are too weak even to weed out delusion - and who could blame you!

The trick is not to think of yourself as lacking, nor having any delusions to weed out, nor in fact having any work to do at all. The thing to convince yourself of is that you are already perfect. If you continually tell yourself, from the minute you awake, that Nature is absolutely perfect, and that you are therefore lacking nothing, then there will be no desire, no boredom, and therefore no despair. You must really believe this. You are Nature. How can Nature be anything other than perfect? You see, it is not a matter of destroying delusions - get such ideas out of your mind - just think of Truth. Get rid of all the ideas of "Enlightenment" and "ignorance"; they would make anyone despair! Fighting against desires is like fighting against a phantom - you just can't win. But when you realize the non-existence of the phantom then all the nightmares are over. This is what Nietzsche means when he says "If thou be fortunate, thou hast but one virtue and no more: thus mayst thou go more easily over the bridge". The more of these virtues you have, the more you will have a need for them. For example, if you train yourself to shoot a gun for selfprotection, then you will see the enemy wherever you go. But in perfection/Reality there are neither friends nor enemies.

Do not be continually convincing yourself why all desires and suffering are not real. This is like fighting with an enemy, and the more you fight with them, the stronger they will become. Just fill your mind with the perfection of Nature, then there will be no place for either ignorance or Enlightenment.

I found an interesting book in the library the other day entitled "Freud and Women" or the like - written by a woman. Inevitably she argues in favour of the feelings (note, she doesn't call them emotions), saying that rationality has failed us as it has failed to answer the important questions of life. I must admit that men have set themselves up for such criticism as they have failed to use reason in fullness, and are consequently inconsistent and hypocritical. Women are intelligent enough to see this. I enclose some photocopies, which I'd like to get back off you sometime.¹¹

Kevin

30 September 1989

From:
David Quinn
Glebe

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

Yes! I've come to the same conclusions as you have. No matter which direction you turn, no matter which path of reason you take, you inevitably arrive at the simplest of all thoughts - that of nihilism. You must be getting bored of saying the same things over and over to me! How dull-witted I must be, to take well over two years of quite earnest thought merely to make the three or four logical steps to the door of Truth! I guess the last year has been, for me, one of clearing up doubts, refining my intellectual understanding, so that now I have very few gross delusions and can now recognize many of the more subtle ones. It is the subtle ones that keep you busy - you can detect them in everything you do, think, or say!

I am becoming more and more fascinated with this idea of "Natures perfection", of "constancy", "non-action", "the middle way", "nihilism", or whatever else it can be called. Just a few moments attention directed along these lines, this way that is neither easy nor difficult, effortlessly produces a clear mind which can illuminate delusions with ease. One must constantly apply it to everything, or else one does fall into the delusions of "seeking", "effort", "enlightenment", "despair", "self", "path", "guilt" etc etc. One even can see through "holy actions" with ease.

"Love of Truth", "passion" - what sort of nonsense is this? But to perform this path, one must be solitary in the deepest sense - or else one will be overwhelmed by praise/blame, success/failure, pride/guilt, worthiness/worthlessness: categories which are the stupid childish fairytales that have been brain-washed into us since Day 1.

There is still one main doubt in me though. We've spoken about it in the past but maybe you can shed more light on it for me. It is this matter of changes of consciousness.

The other day I listened to a tape of a psychologist whose work consists of exploring these changes of consciousness using both drug and non-drug related techniques - a female psychologist by the way. She outlined four categories of deepening altered consciousness, ones which I can easily relate to. They are:

1. Altered sense perception - here colours become more vivid, sounds become sharper, sounds become colours, forms are perceived "differently" etc.

2. The next, a deeper state, in which one gains insights into one's own psychology. One gets an overall picture of one's development since childhood, so that one sees the deeper causes of why one's personality and character is the way it is. One begins to know where one is at, in relation to reality. One sees one's own soul, so to speak.

3. Going deeper again, into the world of religious symbolism. One begins to grasp what a spiritual person is. For example, one sees Jesus in a new light. One also enters the myths and legends of one's culture - talking birds, snakes which seduce, Kings and Queens and castles and lions etc.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Here, it seems to me, it is a case of remembering the very early childhood perceptions of things. The child effortlessly lives in a magically rich world of depth and colour. He attaches no significance to his world - he just exists happily. However, as he begins to develop an understanding in language: adult-conceptions, and begins to develop the adult way of perception, he begins to associate the adult religious and mythical concepts with this magic world. For example, in my case, I must have associated the concept of an old man with a beard as being God (for this is what we were taught) and related this with the world of "spiritual" perception which was rapidly vanishing as time went on. For, nowadays this image occasionally comes to me amongst a flood of a poetic, joyful atmosphere.

It also may explain why children love fairytales - not because there is anything special about the stories themselves, but because it simply reminds them of a world now lost to them.

In any case, here we perceive a more expanded perception into the meaning of these symbols.

4. And lastly - the religious experience - where one's mind dissolves into a blissful unifying nothingness. Here, the psychologist talks of one's consciousness entering the ground of one's being. And here lies my problem, for whenever I hear such a description of such a situation, my mind inevitably dissolves into a blissful unifying nothingness. But I ask: what has this got to do with Truth? Has this anything to do with Nirvana? Reason tells me - no! - because of the fact that distractions arise and one immediately falls into the truth/false, enlightenment/ignorance categories. Besides, I am beginning to suspect that Truth is not an experience, nor a state of being, nor have anything to do with a "change of consciousness".

Yet, what is this experience? Is it purely an effect of the processes of the brain?, that is to say, because, even though one spontaneously enters into it, and thus before one has time to think about it, a moment later it is gone, leaving vague imagery behind.

My question is: should I attach value on it, or should I ignore it, leaving it to come and go as it pleases, regarding it as being merely a freak of nature. My inclination is to the latter, exploring it when the opportunity arises, but to not worry too much about it.

You might be interested in the Journals of Anais Nin, especially the earlier ones written in the 1930's. She is one of these psycho-analytical types, who is suspicious of intellectualism, and prefers to look at her own mind in a more "poetic" way. One thing going for her is that she writes simply, minus all the academic diatribe that swamps the photo-copies you sent me. Aghh! I am astounded how anyone can live in such an academic mental world without going insane with confusion! How ironic! She writes about man's overfascination with intellectualism, in a beautifully intellec-

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

tual way! She should write a poem instead - but then I suppose she would be dismissed as a sentimental female ...!

Woman really is an incredible creature - she is so confident in her ignorance! She is such a "fantastic" being - one part biological, 99 parts fiction. I've become fascinated with the concept "she"; "she" is such a transcendental entity, and cannot be integrated with the world of things.

Consider the following passage:

"It moved gracefully over to me and smiled. I watched it entranced - it lit up the room wherever it went! As it drew closer to me, it's energy overwhelmed and melted me, and leaning over, with it's lips brushing my cheeks, a musky scent wafted, tantalizing, dancing, causing shivers to run up and down my body. Then it drew back, and with a twinkle in it's eye, it began to unbutton its blouse." How sexy!

What an extreme contradiction she is - this is beautifully expressed in sex. Oh, woman of my dreams, she is so pure, innocent, angelic, queen of the goddesses - and then there is the actuality! Oh, my petal, sweetness of my life - surely it isn't true? Are you really this quivering, sweating, panting animal beneath me?

Who can possibly enjoy sex under these conditions - unless a new fantasy is created, one that is based far more closely on the actuality, one involving the emotions of dominance. So really, woman is a trinity, a three-in-one entity involving the actuality and two very different types of fiction.

All my life I've been fooled by woman, believing her to be pure, innocent, and heavenly - I reacted accordingly, only to be continually astounded as to how animal they really are - in their being and in their desires. Woman never has to face this contradiction, as her image of man is always firmly grounded in man the animal.

I'm continually at odds with the adult world - or should I say, the woman's world! Psycho-analysts - those female psychologists - would say that I am neurotic. They would be partly right because there are emotional hang-ups involved, but it is only a case of not wanting to solve my neurosis through the "adultizing" of my personality. The psycho-analysts would then say: yes, you have convinced yourself that you don't want to change, so that you can ease your sufferings through pride.

No, simply, the adult world is fake and pretentious. Consequently, I am still twelve years old. When I was physically twelve, I had, up to then, quite happily played with my friends, but then, upon entering the teens, they all changed. My friends grew into adults in their quest for females - whereas I stopped growing. The only thing that kept me in contact with others was sport. But when I gave up sport, the last contact was broken, and I now exist in this never-never world of immaturity!

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

I am depth and melancholy and unspontaneity personified - and no-one knows how to treat me as such. I fail to entertain them, and they grow quiet and want to move on.

I am no longer a member of the species homo sapiens. Their spontaneity and laughter are worlds away from my introversion. The only similarity between me and them is the shape of our bodies.

But then, as Nietzsche says: you are different to the herd, but not different enough - for it is the herd in you which speaks of the suffering of your differentness.

All this was brought out painfully clear, when I recently did a bit of voluntary work for an arts festival. It had been three years since I was last involved in the art world - and this came as a shock. It was a nightmare, where I was wondering whether I was on my home planet or not! Anyway, I made some observations:

- Definition of Art: The death throes of a disintegrating soul.
- Opening night of an Arts festival: Where dying souls can come together to laugh away the emptiness.
- Alcohol: Used to excite the death throes, to squeeze as much out of the remains as possible.
- The artist: One who deceives himself into believing that he is an individual.
- Opening night: A gathering of people who deceive themselves into believing they are individuals.

... All the while, the mad Van Gogh is ignored or spat upon .

To conclude, I will give you a problem to answer for me: Let us pretend that the Japanese decide to invade tomorrow. They destroy all the cities and throw all us Australians into concentration camps. You are thrown into a particularly harsh camp where there are beatings, food rationing, filth, torture etc. You are all given some uniforms and have your hair shaved. All this is designed to break the spirit of the prisoners so that they become unresisting sheep. As it happens, the prisoners in your camp are managing to hold onto their strength of will, because they have all become Christians - they believe that the sufferings they are now enduring are nothing compared to the eternal happiness that will most assuredly be theirs when they die. Thus, there is this community spirit based firmly upon their belief in the Christian God - a spirit that enables them to endure their sufferings so much so, that if it were taken away, then everyone will be crushed, become crazy, violent, destroyed. Then sooner or later, one of them says to you "Kevin, you look like an intelligent chap - do you believe in Jesus Christ?"

How would you answer?¹²

David

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

P.S

Have you heard that scientists are now starting to grow plastics? Through genetic engineering, they are developing a type of bacteria that will display all the properties that we normally associate with "synthetic".

3 October 1989

From: Kevin Solway
4/69 Sandford st
St Lucia Q 4067

Nietzsche said that if a person with wisdom doesn't write books then its guaranteed they'll be a good letter writer. Your last letter was a joy to read: it would sap the life out of a stone.

Your thinking on altered states seems reasonable to me. Our aim should be to go beyond consciousness, not to an altered state of it.

If there is consciousness of having a particular type of consciousness then this is not ultimate consciousness. Likewise, if there is a conscious lack of a particular consciousness this too is not ultimate consciousness.

If you just keep your mind fixed on never being in error, then who could possibly fault you? - regardless of what consciousnesses you may or may not attain. If we concern ourselves only with living in accord with reason, letting Nature carry us along, then all states of consciousness are immaterial. You might remember the Zen student who asked whether the Buddha was the ordinary mind or the enlightened mind. The Zen Master replied "How many minds have you got? Where on earth do you keep them all?"

I have said at times how the "Trance of Truth" is essential to empower further progress. Hakuin calls this experience "satori". But he also goes on a lot about "kensho", or "seeing into your own nature".

The fad in religion these days is to stress the difference between "mere intellectual speculation" and the vastly superior "experience". Well, if their experience is not entirely reasoned then I for one don't want anything to do with it! Hakuin's "kensho" stresses the intellectual aspect (which is not without its experiential element) of the Truthful mind, whilst "satori" stresses the aspect of pure experience, or the fruition of reason. Hakuin was greatly impressed by a chap called Daie who apparently experienced 18 great satoris and countless smaller ones. Now, if this isn't something to get the desires going and make us anxious then nothing is!

You notice the "and countless smaller ones" - so you see, it is all a matter of degree. If you like, satoris are differing degrees of supreme clarity of mind combined with a perfect intellectual understanding of Truth plus an

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

unfailing Faith. Satoris of various degrees happen by accident, but only after you have developed your knowledge and faith in Truth (ie, wisdom) to a high degree. It is simple enough to attain a clear mind, it is the understanding of Reality that's the hard bit - enough understanding to be able to stand in Reality, sacrificing one's being to it, rather than to grope and grapple with it, in which case there are only "glimpses". These glimpses constitute experiences, whilst the person who can give himself over entirely to his reason conceives of no such experience, and has no call to do so.

The degrees of satori are not unlike degrees of the fourth stage you mentioned, except for the obvious fact that the degrees of satori involve wisdom, which is no small difference.

The types of consciousness you mentioned really made me laugh. For example, the third stage - understanding religious symbolism - really! I wonder whether one understands the true meaning of the Christian cross also? I'll have to repeat what I've said many times before regarding this, so bear with me. The psychologist is actually describing the stages of shamatha (a blissful, onepointed concentration) and mistaking them for shunyata (direct experience of ultimate Reality). She is confusing God with the god-realms; which is not surprising seeing as she knows nothing of God. She is confusing childhood spontaneity and immediacy with spirituality. The "ground of her being" she mentions is in fact her childhood. She is trying to go back to the womb rather than to go forth and conquer death.

Enlightenment is immediacy or spontaneity after reflection; but she cannot bear reflection, so tries to turn back to the immediacy of childhood - just as a dog which is impelled to walk on two feet has every instant a tendency to go again on all fours.

Her understanding of symbols etc in the third stage is an indication of a reversion to childhood fairy tales rather than a progression to the liberated mind. And I sincerely doubt whether her "blissful unifying nothingness" in the fourth stage gives her the strength to give up all her attachments and stand up for the Truth in the face of all adversity!

Shunyata comes about through a combination of Shamatha and Vipashyana (insight into the nature of reality). There can be Shamatha without Vipashyana, but there can be no real Vipashyana without Shamatha. Knowledge without meditation is foolish, but meditation without knowledge is dangerous. Knowledge corresponds to Vipashyana and meditation corresponds to Shamatha. The reason for this is obvious: with meditation you can so easily attain the blissful heights of the god-realms, and then stagnate there, only to spend your future lives in hell. Also, knowledge without concentration and clarity is foolish as knowledge is hindered when there is no clarity and power of thought.

But here we have even more concepts to confuse us and arouse our anxiety. You musn't try to attain shamathic states, just keep life simple, just

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

believe in the perfection of reality and you will blend everything into the one. All things will drop away when they are good and ready to do so, leaving you with your clear mind and your reason. Again, you need neither accumulate virtues nor drop delusions, but simply direct your mind towards reality.

Also, keep in mind that despite Daie's numerous great satoris it is still possible for another who has had no such great experiences to be more wise. Such a person may have a more developed intellectual knowledge, be more consistent with his truth, and be a more effective teacher of that truth. Even so, great satoris are nothing to be scoffed at.

The arts festival sounded just how I imagine them to be. I have always regarded art as "egotism on canvass" that reveals the ugliest and darkest parts of the human mind, and glorifies in it.

Regarding the Japanese invasion: remember the discussion I had with Losang the monk about Hitler and reincarnation; would Hitler be reborn in hell? "Yes" I said, "many times". "How" was the reply, "seeing as you don't believe in reincarnation". "He reincarnated in those whom he tortured, and in their families who suffered" I said.

And here is another reincarnation story. Our brothers the Japanese, our past lives, have deluded themselves with fantasies and want to conquer Australia. We then suffer hellish torture in their hands because we are their future lives - it is inevitable. The law of karma will have its way. Now, if we were to escape from hell, using fantasy (religion) as a means, then we will be making the same mistake as the Japanese, and only creating the causes for our own future reimprisonment and torture. Perhaps one day we will fight back against the Japanese and torture them in return, in the name of God of course, and thus our future lives will be in hell, as we will be reborn as the suffering Japanese. And so the cycle goes on, the cycle of repeated birth and death, repeated rebirth as conquerers, then victims, then conquerers ... and so on for ever.

So when asked "Kevin, you look like an intelligent chap - do you believe in Jesus Christ?". I will answer "God is all powerful. Christ is behind the Japanese invasion: now do you believe in Jesus Christ?". I will speak as though I am speaking to my own child ... or my own self at a younger age.¹³

Kevin

22 January 1990

From: Kevin Solway
4/69 Sandford st
St. Lucia

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Qld 4067

Hello Dave,

I haven't heard from you for a while. Are you still at the same address?

I have typed up our previous letters, and they make interesting reading when seen as a whole. However, I am missing a few of the letters I wrote to you before 16-8-88 as I wasn't taking copies before then. Do you still have them? They would help to improve the continuity of the dialogue. I will send you a copy of them in my next letter for you to make any adjustments to your letters if you wish, if you want to clarify certain points.

I thought the exchange might be helpful for someone who is on the path as the letters have the impact of being personalized. This form of writing seems to penetrate more deeply than impersonal philosophizing. It's up to you if you want others to read your letters. If you change them it would be best not to do so too much as it might dilute their raw flavour, which is the greatest value of them, uncontrived.

I turn twenty nine this month, and I can feel myself losing some of that energy of youth. I am so scared about becoming complacent and starting to enjoy life. I have to continually read Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to generate appropriate disgust. It is so easy to forget how disgusting beauty and love really are.

The man of knowledge desires neither life nor happiness, how much less does he desire woman! I am Nature, how is it possible for me to receive either praise or blame? How could I possibly experience either life or death? How on earth could I be happy or suffer, succeed or fail?

If I am kicked off unemployment benefit, contract cancer and die a lingering and painful death ... what is all this but the Heavenly bliss of Nature?¹⁴

Kevin

1 February 1990

From: David Quinn
50 Adelaide st
South Hobart 7004

Hello Kevin,

It sounds like an interesting idea, that of bringing our correspondence together into one package. It will be interesting to see how the dialogue

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

developed, though I'm sure much of what I thought and wrote back then, I would now regard as foolish. No matter.

Though my intellectual understanding of things is ever developing, I am still sitting on the fence in regards to the nitty-gritty of it all. Procrastination is such a powerful delusion, even though it seems as though much of my putting off is seemingly against my will. I think the delusion is rooted in this idea of "merit" - a hang-over from my Christian upbringing. One does enough to soothe one's conscience, and one's conscience is soothed when one feels that enough merit has been accumulated - one is back in God's favour, until guilt indicates that one has fallen from grace, and so-on. Oh samsara!

I have become interested in this science of chaos, and hence would be interested in any pictures of fractals you might have, that I may borrow for a while.

In any case, I look forward to your next letter.¹⁵

David.

11 February 1990

From: Kevin Solway
38 Girraween Grove
Ashgrove
Qld 4067

Dear Dave,

I may be moving shortly, so I've given you my parents address above. I have typed out all the letters but I haven't been able to get a printout yet, so I've enclosed an incomplete set.

Last night I went to a talk by the leader of the Ramakrishna movement; a "Mataji" something or other, or "Great Mother". A lot of what she said was reasonable enough. She believes in evolution, and that each one of us is God, and therefore beyond life and death. However, she also believes in literal reincarnation, planes of consciousness and so on.

I asked her which interpretation of reincarnation she believed in, the literal or the esoteric. She didn't have any idea what I was talking about. I said that consciousness was a part of the body, and therefore could not be separated from it. She almost choked.

Later on I overheard her speaking to others in a tolerant tone of voice, saying "he has a different interpretation, that's O.K, it's just a different interpretation".

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

This is the subject I wish to deal with in this letter: interpretation, and when interpretation is not interpretation.

Interpretations can be either true or false. And if an interpretation is false, then it is not really an interpretation at all, but a false construct. If a person were to make a false translation from another language, we would not say, "it's O.K, it's just a translation". No, we would say it is a piece of shoddy work! However, modern man has banished true and false from his vocabulary. All he is interested in is his interpretation, which of course can never be wrong.

Their interpretation really means imagination. They build up a mental construct that seems to work, and they call it an "interpretation" or "a model of reality". But it is not a model of reality, nor does it comprise tools for dealing with reality; they have constructed an actual reality for themselves, independent of truth. Their interpretation is more than mere words, labels and concepts to provide a handle on reality; they have turned their back on reality and have fashioned their own private world out of those words and concepts.

To them, imagination is everything, their all. To them, it is what you see that is important, not what is actually there. If what you see is peace and love, then what you see is justified. They strive for purity and tranquility, not truth. They are like the eccentric carpenter, who became obsessed with the beauty, precision and functionality of his tools, and completely forgot about the workpiece, in which was his livelihood.

Christians say there is a God. Buddhists say there is no God. Let's not beat around the bush, these positions are completely opposed to each other. Yet the wise men of today, who have gone beyond reason, or should I say who have abandoned reason, believe these two to be in harmony with each other.

There is no limit to foolish imaginings. Not only do they imagine a false reality, but also imagine their reality to be harmonious with others! I have more respect for a stone than I do for these people. A stone sits quietly where it is in reality and imagines nothing. Yet these fools have removed themselves so far from reality that not even a shard of light could penetrate their darkness. You could place a blazing sun before their eyes and they would claim innocence, so remote are they. I feel more comfortable sitting at a computer keyboard than talking to the men of today. At least the computer is receptive and has potential to learn.

I did a little programming last week, and had to do something called "typecasting". A real number (eg, 1.24) takes up six bytes of computer storage. However, I can refer to this same six bytes by a different name. I can call it an array of six bytes, and I can then get at each byte individually. A real number is not an array of six bytes, but what the real number refers to is the same as what the array refers to. Reals and arrays are called

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

"types", and I have thus "cast" a different type onto the memory area referred to by the real. It is like pouring molten metal into one mould, and then pouring it into a different one. The metal remains the same, how it interacts with us changes.

This is how we should operate in all matters. "Types" or categories exist only for convenience, and we cast them onto the underlying substance in order to deal with it. However, the men of today are under the control of types, and are cast around by them. This is the opposite of typesetting and could be called "castingtype"? They know nothing of any underlying substance, only their God - types.

It is amusing to see the outcome of those whose lives are controlled by types. For example, our Mataji believes in The One and also in individual selfexistence and reincarnation. She can see no contradiction! This is because while her mind is full of one construct there is no room for any other, so she is unaware of anything but the world she is in. Then, at a moments notice, she replaces this construct for another one, and again can only see this new world she is in, and not the contradiction with the one she has just left. This is indeed entertaining for an observer. I am reminded of the child, who when asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, said "Either a soldier or a priest". He likewise saw no contradiction.

I had a short discussion with our Mataji, which revolved around 2 differences. She said that consciousness is infinite and immortal, whilst the body dies. I said that the body is infinite and immortal, and consciousness doesn't exist. One sign of wisdom is a freedom to swap terms around, and do a little typesetting: she couldn't do it.

We also differed regarding matter. She said that matter was really energy, but that matter can be seen, while energy cannot. I said that if matter was energy, and I can see matter, then I can see energy. She said no, how can you see kinetic energy? For example, when I lift this cup it gains potential, or kinetic energy. I said that if we couldn't see energy then we would never know of its existence. We can see energy through our conceptual (sixth) sense, if not by the other five. She was completely stumped.

Once again, she had no freedom with her terms, so came to grief. There is no problem with her words; the problem lies entirely with what she means by them. Her words do not refer to the underlying substance, but are caught up in a rigid mental construct that cannot accommodate the natural world.

Then she went on to say that the body is like a layer, inside which is the soul, but that the soul is not separate from the body. For example, an onion has many layers, and the outer layer is part of the same onion as the inner parts. This is her construct for trying to reconcile her idea of "The two" with "The One". I said I agreed, and continued saying that as the outer and inner layers are interdependent, then when the outer layers die, so too will

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

the inner layers, no longer having protection from the elements. Therefore I said when the body dies, consciousness dies also.

Now, having had her idea of "The two" undermined, she automatically switched back to again assert the immortality of consciousness, and the mortality of the body, and even appealed to the authority of scripture!

I despise these wretched clever ones, who run before you can pin them down. My argument is of no service to her, so she blatantly ignores it. This proves to me once again that they value utility alone, and truth means nothing to them. Or rather, to them, utility means truth. When I disproved the idea that consciousness was separate from the body she saw it as being of no use, and therefore untrue. Utility in this case means matching with the scriptures. If they can match their ideas with what they perceive in the scriptures they feel they have the support of God. My words find no match in the scriptures, so they are of no use, and therefore not true.

I once described Christian priests as cannibals, for they live by eating the man who died for them. So do all these clever wise ones make a slovenly meal of spiritual offerings. A precious gift was left for their children, yet they greedily took it as their own, and left the young bereft.

Excuse me, but I feel eloquent today.¹⁶

Hear from you soon,
Kevin

P.S

I have just listened to the Sunday night religious program on ABC radio, which you may have also heard. They had representatives of Siddhi yoga, Transcendental meditation and Zen Buddhism, and what a load of tripe it was!

There was much talk of "the centre", "the inner self", "the source", happiness, stress, peace and contentment. But not once did I hear of truth and wisdom. And they all agreed with one another! What a marvelous world we live in, when we can all agree on the same deception.

They all made the same mistake that the psychologist made which you mentioned in a previous letter. They have confused the stillness and magic of samadhi with spirituality. They have confused mental clarity and dexterity with goodness. The woman representing TM said that this mental clarity can be used to discover ultimate reality. Sure, it can be, but who would risk losing their new found peace in search of an unnecessary and possibly unreachable thing? Nobody desires truth, this is what is lacking - bodhicitta.

They do not even have an intellectual understanding of reality. They have some starting concepts perhaps, but without bodhicitta to pick them up and run with them, they are going nowhere.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

March, 1990

From: David Quinn
15 Clarke Av
Battery Pt,
Hobart Tas 7004

Hello Kevin

Have you moved yet? I've moved to Battery Point and live in a small bathroom. It is literally a bathroom, or perhaps, it is a tiny flat with a shower in the middle of the living room! In any case, the rent is cheap.

Each time I pick up the pen to write you a letter, I run out of things to say. Or, should I say, most of the things that come to mind would be superfluous to discuss with you. I've barely done any writing over the last couple of months and so am out of practice. This is just a short note to maintain an unbroken contact. I have many ideas to discuss, but at present I'd prefer to let them revolve around my head for a while. When my pen starts flowing perhaps you will get a rather long letter!¹⁷

David

P.S

Yes, the letters make great reading. I think they indicate very well what it actually means to live a philosophic life. Like Kierkegaard's writings, they present the true scale of things, or at least, they indicate the strength of seriousness required to make philosophic progress.

2 April 1990

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

It is said that if you have not yet reached the level of the irreversible bodhisattva (8th bhumi) then you should avoid women, as they can still fall in love with you. How well I know it!

All it takes is a glance, a glint of the eye, and you are found out. This is why I have always said: never look at a woman, because she might look back! The problem is not so much the looking, but the mode of the looking, the looking too long, the intention of the looking.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

The ego has its unresolved attachments, or emotions, and is always on the look-out to attend to them. The irreversible bodhisattva still has delusions, but he can control them the very instant they arise, before they grow, so he stops himself before looking to a woman's face for signs of affection, and for signs of his impact. No woman could love such a man, so he is doubly safe!

Not so I! By now you have gathered my plight. I am safe from most women, but there is always that one . . . that one whom you hope never to meet ... that one who seems not to be human at all, but your own self, yes, out there!, beckoning, appealing to you. Moreover, you are plunged into doubt as to whether she is a wayward part of yourself, or you of she.

I went to Chenrezig last week, and there was this apparition, a woman I believe, whom I glanced at one moment too long. Over the next few days, before I departed, her face went through the phases of struggle, then love, and then torture. And how did I notice? How wretched I am, I looked! How I pray I will soon reach the stage of the irreversible bodhisattva! How I pray!, if not in this life, then in the next. Then, having reached a place of safety, I can halt the growth of my own attachments, as well as her's, effectively controlling my future lives.

And while I departed Chenrezig I did not depart from her, for she pains me even now, as a burning ember in my mind.

It is not enough to be unmoved by a lovely woman; one must be safe from that exceptional one. It is she alone who offers paradise and the illusion of perfection, so it is from she alone one must guard. It is a matter of arranging one's priorities correctly, so as to avoid the dilemma of being able to resist everything except temptation.

Mere sun lotion will not save you from a bullet, but armour will stop bullets and the sun also. Better still, become a ghost!

This woman is my own daughter and responsibility - how can I be an example to her if I look into her eyes with searching emotional need in my own? How will she become a Buddha if I behave in such a way? Where is my faith? What happened to my purpose? How can I, with a true mind, see such a woman as any different to a tree or a rock, reflected in all perfection as in a mirror. And quite apart from her physical form, how can I see her thoughts and feelings as objects of value, and of desire, when their roots, and their being, pervade All. How can I even dream of love and satisfaction when All is love and satisfaction.

What must the bodhisattva surmount? He must surmount love. Most of all he must surmount love of himself, lest he see himself in others!

What could possibly have caused me to fall into this pit? Just a few romantic thoughts over the previous weeks, an ear bent to a song of love, a few dreams of love - and we all know dreams come true. So I still have

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

much work to do, and I'll just continue doing my best - what matter if I fail? Better to have fought and lost than to have never fought at all.

What is on your mind? Have you met anyone with potential?¹⁸

Kevin

8 May 1990

From: David Quinn
15 Clarke Ave
Battery Pt
Hobart 7004

Hello Kevin,

Your last letter was the best of your writings I've seen thus far. Bodhicitta shone forth in all its terrifying glory - you are going all the way, you madman!

But alas, your warning has fallen on deaf ears. Beware of woman you said - and I've gone out and involved myself with a woman!

The apostle Paul says it is better to marry than to burn. In my case it is: better to marry than to cave in inwardly! Violence, self-deception, ignorance, and bullshit - these are the characteristics of much of my last three years. Some things that I attempted were not only unnatural, but were harmful to my development. It was a case of trying to do things in the wrong order.

How my intellect got hooked to your ideas! And how I danced to your tune! It was only a matter of imitation, I told myself - I can change. Formerly I was this; by habit I can change into that! And how true this still is; but not by force - my past lives will not allow a conformity to another's way, even if this other happens to be a witness to the Truth.

Intellectually speaking, I am going from strength to strength. But, as usual, it is my emotions which are slower to catch up. Thus, when I rejected woman in the past, it was done purely from the distance of logic. Tracey was easy to renounce. Her feminine delusions were strong enough to enable me to break away on the raft of disgust alone - at least my new woman has the decency to conceal her's. Logic however, is but fluff to the tide of emotions, and when I stepped out into the cold I got engulfed in a glacier!

My disgust with woman was not complete, I didn't understand them properly, too many doubts stole my reason. Pah! I'd never even began to think through the consequences of rejecting woman. No wonder I collapsed immediately - I hadn't realized that the rejection of her meant her society's rejection of me!

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

And so I've stepped back inside for a while, so that my emotions can prepare themselves properly for the next attempt - what am I saying? - for the first attempt!

Please note: in no way in the world have I admitted defeat!

The reason for my slow reply is not only shame, but also I've waited to send some essays I'm working on, in response to your enquiry about what's on my mind, but they are not finished yet. I'm doing a trilogy of essays on women: "An Examination of Woman", "Woman, Religion, and Mother", and "A Critique of the Independent Woman". They should all tie together under one essential theme: the role of woman in the preservation of society. As it is all coming together, they either have the potential for greatness or fizzleness. In any case, I hope to send you a copy shortly.

My anti-social ways do not permit me to meet many people, and those I do meet are generally women (of both sexes). I have had the displeasure of meeting this "new" breed of independent woman - and so have first-hand knowledge of them. What strikes me is the influence these women have over men, and consequently the enormous amount of woman that exists in the thinking of men.

It seems that wherever I go, seemingly widely differing disciplines - physics, philosophy, and Christianity, for instance - are in some sort of hidden conspiracy: for the promotion of the New Age (woops! woman's) philosophy! Hasn't academic philosophy done enough damage! - Christianity would have died out decades ago if this incessant mental masturbation of philosophy hadn't kept on reviving it! How's this for example: The universe must have had a First Cause. And why? Because otherwise there would have to have been an infinite series of events for the present to be reached. But since the present is here, and since an infinite series of events can never be gotten through, the universe must have had a First Cause! Marvelous! Whilst these learned men are busy attacking the fictitious concept of infinity, Christianity breathes a hearty sigh of relief!

Or look at the way academic philosophy restricts itself, nay, imprisons itself, in the meanderings of determinism and free-will! It can't conceive of any alternatives - namely, the logical implications of hard determinism, that is, Truth - but instead gives substance to each of these opposites, declares the whole problem unsolvable, and retires to the more fruitful discussion of who will get the next chair!

When I compare my thoughts with theirs, and see that my reason is superior to both the philosophers and the scientists, my immediate reaction is not one of pride, but rather the observation of how well these brilliant men disguise their dishonesty! - for I well know how much I conceal my own.¹⁹

David

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

P.S

Can you give me another discussion on altered states? - but this time without the Buddhist terminology. I have no idea what a "still mind" is, for example, - or "one-pointed concentration". How does the altered state relate to our brain? Is it related to infant consciousness? My feeling is that altered states will be something to speak out against in the future, especially as the New Age seems to be replacing Christianity.

14 May 1990

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Dear Dave,

Your taking refuge within the familiarity of the emotions is not so much a lapse from Truth, as an inevitability. You mentioned in a previous letter that your ego still held out hope for a worldly heaven, in the shape of one special kind of woman. The rest is history.

I remember you once told me that you had never really suffered in life. Well, you can't say that now! You say that some of what you attempted was harmful; but I wonder if in the end it will have done you more good than harm. Sometimes the best way to learn is the hard way.

Logic is indeed but fluff to the tide of emotions; but faith in logic evaporates emotions into nothingness. My own faith is not perfect, and I too burn because of woman. But for me, the burning is not too unbearable to live with (or die with more probably). I bless my past lives that although I still struggle, my love of Truth seems more central to me than my love of woman. Thus my solitude expresses a love of Truth rather than a disgust with delusion. And while disgust is a great virtue, love is greater still, for it comes when disgust has run its full course.

Even more than this, I find myself without any love at all. I become like an infant, who is ignorant of the whole gamut of man, woman, love and sex. My face becomes like the moon, still, cool, and reflective. Not giving out, but not holding back either. I see the world around me as a mystery. At such times a woman may pour her love onto and into me, but I can do nothing but watch it run off me as if it were water. This is not to say I do not suffer from memories! - ghosts seem to weigh more heavily on consciousness than do living people.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

A young boy cannot grow a beard, no matter how he tries. But in his late teens the beard grows of its own accord. It is just a matter of hanging-in there.

Something too can be learned from what new agers call "creative visualization". If you can genuinely see, or visualize yourself, in your minds eye, doing something you wish to do, then it will very likely come to pass. I would add that if on the other hand you can't for the life of you visualize yourself doing a particular thing, it will definitely not come to pass. In your case, you could see yourself falling for a particular kind of woman - and lo and behold - it materialized! And you couldn't see yourself in the position of being hated by all society - again, lo and behold! Such is our karma.

In response to your request, I will try to rephrase my thoughts regarding altered states of consciousness.

I must make it absolutely clear that the only thing of any importance at all is truth. All else is useless. If a person speaks the truth they earn my praise; otherwise I scorn them.

The mind that speaks the truth is definitely an altered state. In fact, all states of mind are altered states, though some are more altered than others. The kind of states we are concerned with here are the still, clean-clear, reflective, powerful mind states. In such a state the mind is like a candle flame when there is not the smallest breath of wind - motionless and smooth. The new agers know all about this - but what do they know of truth?

There is no denying the powers of these altered states as far as confidence, mental sharpness, intuition and physical health are concerned. But again, what of truth? If our friends of the new age used such a mind as a stepping stone to truth, then well and good, but to them the altered state is a destination.

To develop a deep love of truth is not an easy task. One can only love truth in fullness and purity when one sees the truth in all its fullness and purity. And how does one see the truth in all its fullness and purity? One does so by freeing the mind of agitations (which buffet it) and dullness (which takes the edge off it), and then directing the mind, with all its (now) unrestrained power, towards truth.

The mental vision of the eternal is a great joy; but even this is paled by the feeling of eternity. And a great joy indeed is needed to out-joy the joy of woman.

New agers attain the clean-clear-still mind by merely concentrating their thoughts away from disturbing ideas and feelings. In contrast, the sage attains it by going directly for truth. The one is spiritual, the other is pitiful.

But how can one strive for truth, if one has an untruthful mind?: One sets out in the direction of truth, with a sure stride and never a backwards

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

glance. This leads to mental clarity. Mental clarity illuminates more truth, which in turn forces more mental clarity, and so on. It is like loves flood-tide sweeping over the banks in surging waves.²⁰

Hope to hear from you soon,

Kevin

29 May 1990

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill 4101

Further to your questions regarding altered states of consciousness:

How does it relate to our brain?:

I find it useful to picture the mind as a jungle of mental pathways. When many concerns and fears are playing on the mind all these pathways get clogged-up with traffic - none of which knows where it is going. The mind is as good as useless in such a state, as it is not able to make the free and easy mental associations which constitute 90% of its illuminating power. Thus the jumbled mind has no creativity, no imagery, no lateral thinking, no intuition, and no memory.

But if the countless concerns can be layed to rest, all the unnecessary traffic disappears. The roads of the mind are left free and wide for the specialized traffic which should be using them.

There are two ways of clearing away all the unwanted traffic: either one can concentrate the mind away from unpleasant subjects, or one can destroy all delusions outright.

Is the altered state related to infant consciousness?

An infant experiences the unhindered clean-clear mind because the jamming traffic is still under construction.

So, you could say there are three different forms of the clean-clear altered state of consciousness. Only one of which concerns us.

Over the next couple of months I will try to complete "Poison words from the heart". Well, as complete as it's going to be for now. If you have any gems of wisdom, or powerful images that alter the mind, or crystalized thoughts on the new age, then send them up and I'll try to incorporate them.

Overall the book has shaped-up as a condemnation of the feminine. Modern science and the theory of relativity have shot man's (feeble) faith in rationality to provide absolute truths. Reality has imposed on his dreams and undermined the ideals which sustained him. Thus he has fallen back on

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

his feminine resources. This is where women step in, for they know all about being women, and are all too keen to lend a helping hand - or a well placed boot.

But I have not written against the feminine just because the new age (the woman's age) is upon us. The feminine is the eternal enemy of reason, and this woman's age only highlights the fact.²¹

All for now,
Kevin

P.S
Looking forward to receiving your essays.

15 June 1990

From: David Quinn
15 Clarke Av
Battery Pt
Tas 7004

Hello Kevin,

Included are some thoughts of which I'd recorded over the last year. I don't know if they will be of any use to you - it seems I'm saying nothing new - but perhaps they might provide a contrast to your more lyrical style.

My essays on woman are coming along - slowly. There is a difference between pithy little one-liners and a sustained discussion! Not only is the literary side of things a problem, but also I find myself getting deeper and deeper into her maze, so that sooner or later I will have to shout: stop!

Of late, I've been wallowing in my mud again. Things are seeming to be conspiring against me! Nietzsche says that for the man of knowledge, this present age is perhaps the most dangerous of all. Due to science, and the intermingling of cultures, our gross intellectual delusions are evaporating - thus providing conditions for the arising of infinite intellectual knowledge. On the other hand, we are brought up so delicately that any such knowledge becomes dangerous to us weaklings (this being the reason why the promising conditions for infinite intellectual knowledge are then all but obliterated). In other words, in the past the problem was less the presence of strength, but rather, the lack of intellectual ability. Today, the situation is somewhat reversed. This is why we see "love" being so worshipped as it is - we are too weak to face the nihilism of science.

The more that one thinks infinite thoughts, the more one has to deal with one's solidness. Cold, hunger, pain - all conspire to mock one's efforts,

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

let alone the happiness on the other peoples faces! I have a question for you: if you get kicked off the dole, what then? The problem with soup kitchens is that they are run by Christians - to give satisfaction to their deludedness is definitely a contradiction to our philosophy! Indeed, to beg on the streets - could we here escape the Christian? It seems there is no way out of this dilemma - either work or beg - both involve lies and deception. What irony - the dole is perhaps the most ethical way to live!

Your last letter on altered states makes sense to me. I'd been tending to think of it in this way: the meditator receives his altered states unexpectedly and only momentarily. This is because as soon as it happens anxiety arises - either from his feeling of success, or more to the point, from his unease over the totally new. Thus he quickly labels it "God" or "Nirvana", thereby giving his ego security again, and boosts it with the feeling of success. Although, of course, he can prolong the heavens through mental skill, as you have mentioned.

The true man, however, is thoroughly grounded in the habit of reason, is always aware of his non-self-existence, and thus enters these realms without fear. Because he places no egotistical value on them he inhabits the heavens freely when called to do so.

My mind, when freed from woman, has lately been on the old classical philosophical problem: the "thing-in-itself". Basically, it boils down to this: the relativity of perception and knowledge, hence the unknowability of absoluteness. All things in the world are fictions, are they not? Things are products of interactions between processes. The qualities of an object depends just as much on the nature of the perceiver, as on the nature of it's own particular causes. However, we must never fall into the trap of saying things are appearances. The perceived world is not a reflection of reality, but is reality itself! It becomes unreal when we believe that the qualities of an object belong to the object itself, or, indeed, if we believe in the reality of qualities or perceptions themselves.

What joy there is in realizing the misguidedness of the question: "Why does anything exist at all?!" How infinitely wrong this question is! Yet it is this very question which stumps the academic philosopher. As you can see, I've come in contact with this peculiar life-form of late. It is amazing - every time you get past their logical games they immediately start throwing things at you: "Don't you believe the Universe exists?", "How does a beginningless Universe explain anything?", "Why, why, why are we here at all?".

I've heard a lovely little phrase recently from science: The Universe is a single, infinite event.

It seems that academic philosophy is entirely based on the premise: the Universe exists. This contradiction in terms is never questioned, but instead supports all their fictions. I don't know if you've attended a first year

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

philosophy course but it is truly disheartening to see this garbage under the name of philosophy - it convinces the students that all philosophy is useless (for they are young enough to see through it).

My course on philosophy:

- Destroying all boundaries, we eliminate the need for things. Things having disappeared, change is seen to be unreal. Once you get rid of change, then you get rid of movement. Unmoving, there ceases to be time. Gone is time; - and purpose is thereby eliminated. No purpose means no enlightenment, and thus all things are free to follow their natural course.

- It is true that God does not change. However, He is most emphatically not an unchanging substance!

- To the women in my audience: cause and effect is most definitely real. To the men in my audience: cause and effect is most definitely not real.

- Understand woman, and you will understand the highest. Transcend woman, and you will transcend the highest. Reject woman, and you will reject the highest - the ego!

- People who believe in free-will save themselves - and lose the world.

- The irony of woman - intolerance and injustice provide the necessary conditions for her tolerance and love.

- Do not get into the habit of resisting God! How does one develop such a habit? By preferring ease and comfort over struggle and hardship - that is, by preserving one's self. At every moment, we are faced with the decision between God and egotism. At every moment we strengthen the habit we choose. Is there anything more ridiculous than the attempts of the comfortable man seeking the knowledge of Truth? For if he happens, by chance, to stumble upon such knowledge, his first instinct will always be to run away!

- It is sometimes said that the path is a spiral. Great, just what we need - another excuse to escape constancy!

- Erotica: pornography approved by women. The sensitive man can get lusty with a clear conscience.

- The irrationality of western philosophy lies in its continual need to revive irrational nonsense in order to give substance to its own love of rationality. Western philosophy: an indispensable aid to women and Christians.

- Can the scientist be distinguished from the Christian in his search for "laws" of Nature? Is not the scientist now the high priest in touch with the divine? His search for "ultimates" over and above the flux of Nature will always be doomed to failure. For there are no laws of Nature - She is forever infinitely removed from such things.

- Freedom of thought can only increase in proportion to the amount of honesty one expresses in one's life.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

- The words of the wise are whispers - to one another and no-one else! They flutter from one sagely heart to another, century to century, as if in joyous ignorance of the clamouring chatter of the masses. Occasionally though, the masses decide to look up - and they catch sight of one of these ghosts. They prepare the ropes and hooks, and catch hold of its sweet flutterings. They deludedly try and hoist themselves off the ground - but alas, they are much too heavy for the task; and succeed only in dragging down our heavenly friend. Then, as if in disgust or boredom, the masses enjoy crushing the life out of him - to extinction.

- There are no rewards for merely "sitting and thinking". He who believes in merit loses all merit.

- The compassionate always appear arrogant. The arrogant always appear compassionate.

- What are the two types of Buddhism? The Mahayanist is an utter rarity, a clash, a conflict, a thoroughly new species of life forever at odds with the world. He does not spare himself, he goes all the way - in him, the terror of reality is most concentrated, thus he appears as a nightmare to the weak and the compassionate. Outrage is the response to his truths: "Away with that man, he does not deserve to live!" The Hinayanist, on the other hand, is one who understands the implications of the Mahayanist life, but is too weak or cowardly to live it himself, at present. Let this be emphasised: if Mahayana is not understood, then one is neither a Mahayanist nor a Hinayanist. The latter is one who suffers greatly over his weaknesses - on account of his understanding - but his love of Truth is still very strong. Thus he has potential for Mahayana. And for the rest? I mean the "two vehicles" of Buddhism, with all its gurus and paths and meditational techniques? These numerous clear-eyed smiling people are so infinitely below the level of the Hinayanist, and, hence, are not on any path at all.

- Perhaps all the philosophical teachings of the past are far emptier than they seem. Maybe it is a case, that the "great man of wisdom" in the past discovered something rather unpleasant - truth? - and then proceeded to distance themselves as far away as possible from it. This process of distancing then came to be known as philosophy ...

- What an odd sort of existence it is, that befalls all those who try to "spiritualize" everything, or who try to fit the world into their minds. How the jar of jam must mock them!

- The bound mind: one which believes in boundaries.

- Negative thinking, self-criticism, guilt - these are but forms of positive thinking, and poor forms at that!

- An individual cannot have friends - by definition.

- The goal of woman: to turn men into infants.

- It is the one who is too cowardly to tread the spiritual path who is praised - for his humanity!

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

- Truth appears cold - as long as one is attached to warmth.
 - All moralizing is a process of self-preservation performed by the weak. Philosophy is an attempt to preserve one's attachments. Where moralizing and philosophizing end, there begins the spiritual path.
 - Destroy all those wretched scientific concepts like matter, space, stars, earth, life etc - then you will see that existence, true life - I mean, yourself - will last forever.
 - The "decent citizen" is a reasonable man whose irrationality is able to be concealed by favourable circumstances.
 - People read novels, fall in love, watch television - because their lives have no significance.
 - The "mature" man - one who has lost the strength and desire for perfection, and now proclaims such striving to be folly. Here begins compassion ...
 - Of what use is independence to a woman, if she is - all alone?
 - Spirituality is practicality - in it's most practical sense.
 - The universal catch-cry is: "The most important thing in life is love." What is really meant here, of course, is: "The most important thing in life is that which makes me feel most important."
 - "Opportunity knocks once, but temptation comes every day" - the philosophy of escape.
 - One should not enter solitude in order to find God. No, correctly understood, solitude is the path to God.
 - One cannot throw away attachments - they must be outgrown.
 - To seek God is to find God.
 - Egotism is none other than the selling of oneself to others, in whatever shape or form. Humility and modesty are also tools of the trade.
 - Earnestness - a means to escape seriousness?
 - From the depths: God is found - only at the expense of others!
 - On religion: "Where there is a corpse, there the vultures will gather."
- Jesus
- The way to God is through atheism pushed to the extreme. Yes, pure spirituality and pure atheism are one and the same.
 - Life is fake, being a human is fake. Blessed is he who sees through the fakeness of life and humanity.
 - Compassion: We love to see others who are weak and helpless - it gives us strength.
 - Oh infinite seriousness! What art thou? What is thy plan for me? ... What? Die to the world? Never!
 - Fundamentally, it is the heart which thinks - whatever affects the heart is thought about more effortlessly than any amount of "meditation".
 - The majority of men stand with both feet firmly planted on the ground, while passing judgement on this, that, and the other. I, on the other

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

hand, seem to be forever floating above the ground, my arms and legs flailing about for something to hold on to, while being buffeted about by this, that, and the other.²²

23 June 1990

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill, 4101

Dear Dave,

Thanks for the selection of writings you sent me. I have used about half of them in the book. I am trying to make this book of such a quality that it will be able to be read repeatedly without becoming boring - like an eternal well-spring of fresh, life-giving water. It would be good if I can publish the book in conjunction with my compilation of other peoples' writings (which you already have), just to show that I don't have a monopoly on the truth. Together they would constitute the last word that needs to be said on the matter. Of course, that word was spoken thousands of years ago, but never as clearly and unreservedly as I have done.

I have yet to decide on a title for the book, but I have narrowed the choice down to three: "Poison words for the heart", "Poison words from the heart", or "Words for eternity". I tend to like the first one, though I am interested in what appeals to you. I think a good title for our correspondence would be "Letters between enemies".

The question of survival is not a dilemma if you just do your best for wisdom. You cannot avoid boosting other peoples ego's. Your mere existence feeds the ego's of your parents. So it is a matter of weighing-up the pros and cons, and then doing the best you can. All one can realistically do is minimize the degree to which one can be used by others.

On the subject of altered states, they have an important value as a form of bio-feedback. You can know your love of God is good if your mind is still, clear, and receptive, and your body relaxed, supple, and balanced (provided of course that you don't try to achieve samadhi by other means). The reason I stress the importance of meditative states so often is because they provide a convenient benchmark and a scale. They serve remind us that we cannot become complacent until we are able to rest in samadhi twenty four hours a day, as fully enlightened Buddhas.

You said in a previous letter that you think some women have potential for greatness. You will have a hard job convincing me of that. For while it is certainly possible for women to attain Buddhahood if they become men, such a mind transformation is so difficult for them.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

I met "your" Sue last week. She is certainly far ahead of the pack of women, but I can still see she has many hindrances. The greatest single hindrance for a woman is her need of a man. She must make a master of man regardless of his intelligence, which involves subverting her own intelligence. Man, on the other hand, wants a woman to worship the power of his mind, so his sacrifice is not nearly so damaging.

I hope Sue pursues her ideas and writes a book about women. Being a woman, her words will have a thousand times more impact on that half of the species than anything I can say. It is difficult for a woman to brand another woman "sexist", for all women share the same body. Women will not be able to separate themselves from her, and they will have to confront what she says.

I will complete the book over the next six weeks, and I will then get as many bound photocopies of it as I can afford. I will try and get a few copies hard-bound, as you have done with the compilation. If you can afford a couple of hundred dollars, that should buy you quite a few copies to do with as you please.²³

24 August 1990

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Hello Dave,

Have you received your copies of "Poison for the heart" which I sent a few weeks ago?

Sometimes when I read it I think it is good. At other times I think it is drab and awkward. Regardless, it is the best I can do given my limited literary talents.

Getting it published will be a problem. Most authors pay for the publication of their first book. But I have to try; I can't think of anything better to do in my life. I have sent copies to Phillip Adams, Clive Robertson, and David Millikan (Director of ABC religious programs) asking them for letters of recommendation which I can take to a publisher. I haven't heard back from them yet.

How are your essays progressing? What is Sue up to?²⁴

Here's wishing you Faith,
Kevin

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

14 September 1990

From: David Quinn
17 Broadwaters Pde
Sandy Bay
Tasmania 7005

Kevin

Yes, I received your books. To my way of mind, it succeeds in clearly indicating the direction of Truth, or, more importantly, in bringing the past teachings of the Buddha etc from the distance of the imagination to actuality. That is, it confronts one with choices and decisions. It is the sort of literature that would inspire either love or hate, and nothing in between. I'm sure you know this.

From a purely literary point of view, I do find it uneven. That is, it is smooth and fluid in many places, but there are patches of awkwardness - it appears rushed, not polished, in places. I dare say that a publishing company will ask you to "rework" it before consenting to publish it. However, it is a minor point. (I would be interested in hearing the replies of Adams and co.). In short, the book is like having Kevin himself in the house.

My own essays are on hold. Indeed, I haven't penned a word for several months, due to fights and flounderings in the realm of "No-faith". A pity, because I consider the essays so far as being excellent, and I note with interest that much of the material is not covered in your own essays.

Furthermore, I'm thinking of adding another whole section, a subject not strictly on women, but related, and this, I see will take a while. So, perhaps, the essays will be finished within, hopefully, the next eight years.

My specialty at the moment is the developing crystal-clarity of my ego. It is amazing how much can be achieved on top of a fence!

In any case, I must go now as I must go and talk to Kevin.²⁵

David

P.S

I've moved to a new address.

5 October 1990

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Hello Dave,

I love it when our part of the earth tilts more towards the sun. I have recently been basking in it at Chenrezig, building up my energy for fighting against the Dharma and all its True Teachers.

While there I had a discussion with a chap about how to deal with the 99% (morons). He said that white lies were acceptable, as it attracted them to Buddhism, where they would later come to see the real truth. I said that lies, no matter how small, cannot be justified under any circumstances. I enclose a copy of the letter I have just sent to him on the subject. I am sure you will find it of interest.

Regarding "Poison for the heart", yes, it certainly is patchy from a stylistic perspective. I think the reason is that I tend to write better about subjects I personally find inspiring. Yet a significant proportion of "Poison" was written purely out of a feeling of responsibility, because I believed that some things had to be said, in whatever crude manner, because if I didn't say them nobody else was going to. After re-writing them two or three times without much improvement, my impatience said "Enough! - life is so short." If my ego got too aroused while trying to pamper a few words or sentences into a beautiful form I had to stop, and make do with less than perfection.

I could've spent the next 30 years polishing it smooth, but I don't know when I'm going to die. I decided that I must get some copies out now, because such writings are so rare and valuable. Now it is done I can spend whatever years I have left to perfect it and add to it further.

For this same reason, I'd like to see your essays on women, especially as they covered different material to my writings. Think of your future lives! How much they depend on you! If you die before sharing a few copies around, then your efforts will have been largely wasted.

Here are a few ideas that have occurred to me recently:

- Does a newborn baby get bored? No, he has nothing to get bored with.

Now, sentimental rubbish or poisonous insight?

- When in love,
She smiles.
When she smiles,
He worries.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

- Her joy is for her joy itself, And her smile is for joy, and not for him. She looks inwards, while he looks to her. For the joy is her's, which she cannot give. Because he cannot take it.

- At the moment of love
She accepts
He suspects

Here is the letter I sent to Gordon:

4-10-90
From
Kevin Solway (to Gordon)
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill 4101

Hello Gordon,

Hakuin is probably the best teacher of truth I have ever come across. Superior even to the Buddha. His every word plunges my heart into waves of joy. I only wish I could express myself as eloquently as him. Because I can't, I thought I'd send up this photocopy of one of Hakuin's teachings (*), which argues my point about "levels of teachings" better than I can. However, I have been writing about this subject a bit lately, so I'll accompany Hakuin with some of my own thoughts. The numbers below coincide with those marked on the photocopies. Tell me how you think Hakuin's teaching methods match up with those of the Tibetan lamas!

Talk by Hakuin

No. 5

Introductory to lectures on the records of old Sokko.

Translated by Norman Waddell.

IN THE THIRD section of the *Platform Sutra*, the one devoted to doubts and questions, the Sixth Patriarch makes the statement: "Considered as a manifestation in form, the Paradise in the West lies one hundred and eight thousand leagues from here, a distance created by the ten evils and eight false practices in ourselves." Shuko of Unsei, a Ming priest of recent times who lived in Hangchou during the Wan-li period (1573-1672), wrote in his commentary on the *Amida Sutra*:

The *Platform Sutra* mistakenly identifies India with the Pure Land of Bliss. India and China are both part of this defiled world in which we live. If India were the Pure Land, what need would there be for people to aspire toward the eastern quarter or yearn toward the west? "Amida's Pure Land of

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Bliss lies west of here, many millions of Buddha lands distant from this world."

What we know as the *Platform Sutra* consists of records compiled by disciples of the Sixth Patriarch. We have no assurance that what they have compiled is free from error. We must be very careful to keep such a work from beginning students. If it falls into the hands of those who lack the capacity to understand it, it will turn them into wild demons of destruction. How deplorable!

Faugh! Who was this Shuko anyway? Some hidebound Confucian? An apologist for the Lesser Vehicle? Maybe a Buddhist of Pure Land persuasion who cast groundless aspersions on this sacred work because he was blind to the profound truth contained in the *Meditation Sutra*, [Which states that the Pure Land is "not far from here."] because he was simply not equipped with the eye which would enable him to read sutras? Or maybe he was a cohort of Mara the Destroyer manifesting himself in the guise of a priest, shaven-headed, black-robed, hiding beneath a mask of verbal prajna, bent on destroying with his slander the wondrously subtle, hard-to-encounter words of a true Buddhist saint?

Such ascriptions would seem to fit him all too well. Yet someone took exception to them. "There is no reason to wonder about Master Ko," he said. "Take a good look and you will see that he just lacked the eye of kensho. He didn't have the strength that comes from realizing the Buddha's truth. Not having the karma from previous existence to enable him to reach prajna wisdom if he continued forward and being afraid to retreat because of the terrible samsaric retribution he knew awaited him in the next life, he turned to Pure Land faith. He began to devote himself exclusively to calling Amida's Name, hoping that at his death he would see Amida and his attendant Bodhisattvas arriving to welcome him to birth in the Pure Land and thereby attain the fruit of Buddhahood.

"So when he happened to open the *Platform Sutra* and read the golden utterances of the Sixth Patriarch expounding the authentic 'direct pointing' of the Zen school, and he realized they were totally at odds with the aspirations he had been cherishing, it dashed all his hopes. Yet this also roused him into putting together the commentary we now see. It was his way of redeeming the worthless notions to which he had grown so attached.

"So he was no Confucian, Taoist, or ally of Mara either. He was just a blind priest with a tolerable facility for the written word. We should not be surprised at him. Beginning from the time of the Sung dynasty, people like him have been as numerous as flax seed."

If what this person says is in fact true, the course of action that Shuko took was extremely ill-advised. We are fortunate that we do have the compassionate instructions of the Sixth Patriarch. Shouldn't we just read them with veneration, believe in them with reverence, and enter into their sacred precincts? What are we to make of a person who would use his minimal literary talent to endeavor to belittle the lofty wisdom and great religious spirit of a man of the Sixth Patriarch's stature? Even granting that to be permissible as long as he is deluding only himself, it is a sad day indeed when he

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

commits his misconceptions to paper and publishes them as a book which can subvert the Zen teaching for untold numbers of future students.

We generally regard the utterances of a sage as being at odds with the notions held by ordinary people, and people who are at variance with such utterances we regard as unenlightened. Now if the words of a sage are no different from the ideas the unenlightened hold to be right and proper, are not those words themselves ignorant and unenlightened, and unworthy of our respect? If the ignorant are not at variance with the words of an enlightened sage, doesn't that make them enlightened men, and as such truly worthy of our reverence?

My comment:

The millions upon millions of Buddhists all agree with the teachings of their great gurus. This means that either the gurus are fakes/evil liars, or the millions upon millions are all truly enlightened beings.

To begin with, Sokei Daishi was a great master with an unsurpassed capacity for transmitting the Dharma. None of the seven hundred pupils who studied with the Fifth Patriarch at Mount Huang-mei could even approach him. His offspring cover the earth now from sea to sea, like the stones on a go board or the stars in the heavens. A common hedgerow monk like Shuko, whose arbitrary conjecture and wild surmise all comes from fossicking around in piles of old rubbish, does not even belong in the same category as Sokei.

Are you not aware, Shuko, that Master Sokei is a timeless old mirror in which the realms of heaven and hell and the lands of purity and impurity are all reflected equally? Don't you know that they are, as such, the single eye of the Zen monk? A diamond hammer couldn't break it. The finest sword on earth couldn't penetrate it. This is a realm in which there is no coming and going, no birth and death.

The light emitted from the white hair between Amida Buddha's eyebrows, which contains five Sumerus, and his blue lotus eyes, which hold the four great oceans, as well as the trees of seven precious gems and pools of eight virtues that adorn his Pure Land, are all shining brilliantly in our minds right now - they are manifest with perfect clarity right before our eyes. The black cord hell, aggregate hell, shrieking hell, interminable hell and all the rest, are, as such, the entire body of the venerable Sage of Boundless Life (Amida) in all his golden radiance.

Whether it is called the Shining Land of Lapis Lazuli in the East or the Immaculate Land of Purity in the South, it makes no difference - originally, it is all a single ocean of perfect, unsurpassed awakening, and, as such, it is also the intrinsic nature in every human being.

Yet even while it is present in them all, the way each one of them views it is never the same, but varies according to the weight of individual karma and the amount of merit and good fortune they enjoy.

Those who suffer the terrible agonies of hell see seething cauldrons and white-hot furnaces. Craving ghosts see raging fires and pools of pus and

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

blood. Fighting demons see a violent battleground of deadly strife. The unenlightened see a defiled world of ignorance and suffering - all thorns and briars, stones and worthless shards - from which they turn in loathing to seek the Land of Purity. Inhabitants of the deva realms see a wonderful land of brilliant lapis lazuli and transparent crystal. Adherents of the two vehicles see a realm of transition on the path to final attainment. Bodhisattvas see a land of true recompense filled with glorious adornments. Buddhas see a land of eternal tranquil light. How about you Zen monks. *What do you see?*

You must be aware that the jewelled nets of the heavenly realms and the white-hot iron grates in the realms of hell are themselves thousand-layered robes of finest silk; that the exquisite repasts of the Pure Land paradise and the molten bronze served up to hell-dwellers are, as such, banquets replete with a hundred rare tastes. Nowhere in heaven or on earth will you find a second moon. Yet there is no way for those of ordinary or inferior capacity to know it.

Followers of the patriarch-teachers, you monks of superior capacity investigating the hidden depths, until you release your hold from the edge of the precipice to which you hang and perish into life anew, you can never enter this samadhi. But the moment you do, the distinction between Dharma principle and enlightened person disappears, differentiations between mind and environment vanish. This is what the coming of the old Buddha to welcome you to the Pure Land is really about. You are those superior religious seekers the sutra says are destined for "the highest rank of the highest rebirth in the Pure Land."

Master Ko, if you do not once gain entrance into the Pure Land in this way, you could pass through millions upon millions of Buddha lands, undergo rebirth eight thousand times over, but it would all be a mere shadow in a dream, no different from the imagined land conjured up in Kantan's slumbering brain.*

The Zen master Sokei stated unequivocally that the ten evils and eight false practices separate us from the Western Paradise. It is a perfectly justified, absolutely authentic teaching. Were the countless Tathagatas in the six directions all to manifest themselves in this world at one time, even they could not change a single syllable of it.

Furthermore, Master Ko, if I said to you, "The Western Paradise is eighteen leagues from here." "The Western Paradise is seven feet from here." "The Western Paradise is eighteen inches over there." these would be perfectly justified, absolutely authentic teachings. How can you lay a hand, or foot, on them! When I make those statements what village do you suppose I am referring to? And if you hesitate or speculate for even a split second, a broken vermilion staff seven feet long stands ready against the wall.

Your resentment at finding the Sixth Patriarch's ideas different to your own led you to take a true teacher totally dedicated to the Buddhist goal of

* Kantan was a poor scholar who, while travelling to take the official examinations, dreamed that he passed them with flying colors and, after an illustrious government career, attained the post of prime minister, whereupon he woke up, realized that life is an empty dream, and returned home.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

universal salvation and represent him as a dunce who does not even know the difference between the Pure Land and India - do you think that is right?

We can only suppose that some preconception of the Sixth Patriarch which had formed in Shuko's mind led him to think: "It's really a shame that the Sixth Patriarch, with that profound enlightenment of his, was originally a woodcutter from the uncivilized south. Being illiterate, he couldn't read the Buddhist scriptures. He was rude, completely ignorant, in fact, he was no different from those countrymen who tend cows and catch fish or work as menials."

But is it really possible that even such people wouldn't know the difference between the Pure Land and India? Even a tiny child believes in the Pure Land and worships it with a sense of reverence. And we are talking about a great Buddhist teacher - one of the "difficult-to-meet, hard-to-encounter" sages who rarely appears in this world. The venerable Sokei Daishi was a veritable udumbara flower who blossomed auspiciously in answer to the prophecies of the Buddhist sages.

This genuinely enlightened man, endowed with the ten superhuman powers of Buddhahood, appeared in the world riding upon the vehicle of the universal vow and revealed a secret of religious attainment not preached by any Buddha-patriarch before him. It was like the Dragon god entering the worldencompassing ocean, turning its salt water to fresh and working with perfectly unobstructed freedom to make it fall over all the earth as pure, sweet manna, reviving parched wastelands from the ravages of great drought. It was like a rich man entering an immense treasure house, emerging with many articles rarely seen in the world and distributing them to the cold and hungry, giving them new life by relieving their need and suffering. Such activities have nothing to do with speculation or conjecture. They cannot be approached by ordinary human understanding.

Priests of today who have woven themselves into complicated webs of words and letters, who, after sucking and gnawing on this literary sewage until their mouths suppurate, proceed to spew out a tissue of irresponsible nonsense - should not even be mentioned in the same breath as the Sixth Patriarch.

My comment:

Guess who this refers to!

Shakyamuni Buddha tells us that the Pure Land lies many millions of Buddha-lands distant from here. The Zen patriarch Eno says the distance is one hundred and eight thousand leagues. Both utterances come from men whose power - strength derived from great wisdom - is awesomely vast. Their words reverberate like the earth-shaking stomp of the elephant king, resound like the roar of the lion monarch, bursting the brains of any jackal or other scavenger who stops to ponder them or shows so much as the slightest hesitation.

Yet Shuko glibly delivers the judgment that the "*Platform Sutra* mistakenly regards India as the Pure Land of Bliss." "What we know as the *Platform Sutra*," he says, "consists of records compiled by disciples of the Sixth

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Patriarch. We have no assurance that what they have compiled is free from error." Now maybe that sounds like he is trying to be helpful, but what he is really doing is disparaging the Sixth Patriarch.

In the *Rokusodankyo Kokan*, a commentary on the *Platform Sutra*, the author writes: "According to gazeteers and geographical works I have consulted, the distance from the west gate of Chang-an to the east gate of Kapilavastu in India is one hundred thousand leagues, so Shuko's criticism of the *Platform Sutra* for mistaking India for the Pure Land may well have a solid basis in fact."

Now that isn't even good rubbish. But even supposing (alas!) that the author's penchant for poking into old books is justified, I want him to tell me: What gazeteer or geography since the time of the Great Yu ever stated that India is distant from China by ten evils and eight wrong practices? It's a great shame, really. Instead of wasting his time nosing through reference books, why didn't he just read the *Platform Sutra* with care and respect, and devote himself attentively to investigating Shakyamuni Buddha's true meaning? If he had continued to contemplate it - both coming and going - he would suddenly have broken through and grasped that meaning. Then he would have that "solid basis" of his. He would be clapping his hands joyfully, howling with laughter - he couldn't have helped himself. *How about those great roars of laughter? What would they mean?*

It is absurd for someone in Master Ko's advanced state of spiritual myopia to be going around delivering wild judgments on the golden utterances of a genuine sage like the Sixth Patriarch. The author of the *Rokusodankyo Kokan* is another of those like Master Ko who spends his entire life entangled in a jungle of vines down inside a dark cave. They are like a midget in a crowded theatre trying to watch a play. Since he can't see anything, he jumps up and down and applauds when everyone else does. They also remind you of a troupe of blind Persians who stumble upon a parchment leaf inscribed with Sanskrit words; they wander off into the middle of nowhere and secretly pool their knowledge trying to decipher the meaning of the text. But as they haven't the faintest idea what it says, they fail to get even a single word right, and they turn themselves into laughing stocks in the bargain.

Actually, such people do not even merit our attention, and yet since I am afraid of the harm they can do misleading even a few sincere seekers, I find it necessary to lay down a few entangling vines of my own like this. "The greatest care must be taken to keep such a work from beginning students," says Shuko's commentary. "If it does chance to fall into the hands of those who lack the capacity to understand it, it will turn them into wild demons of destruction. How deplorable!"

My answer to the gross irresponsibility of such a statement is: we must take the greatest care not to pass stupid, misinformed judgments on a work like the Platform Sutra. When people with unenlightened views judge such a work on the basis of their own ignorance, they immediately transform themselves into wild demons of destruction. It is that which I find deplorable.

To begin with, Tathagatas appear in the world one after another for the sole purpose of opening up paths to Buddha-wisdom for sentient beings. That has always been their primary aim in manifesting themselves. Al-

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

though the sutras and commentaries contain a variety of Dharma "gates" - abrupt and gradual teachings, verbal and pre-verbal teachings, exoteric and esoteric teachings, first and last teachings - in the end they all come down to one teaching and one teaching alone: the fundamental self-nature inherent in each and every person.

My comment:

Note especially:- "Pure Land of her own intrinsic mindnature" - not a Pure Land after death. Note also:- "It was a specific remedy (my italics) prescribed for the occasion and imparted to Queen Vaidehi alone." That is, the Buddha did not teach it to large masses of dull-witted beginners indiscriminately.

Abrupt teachings vs gradual, verbal vs pre-verbal, exoteric vs esoteric, first vs last teachings. All this does not, and should not mean lies vs truth. Better small truths than small lies. "Gradual teachings" refer to small truths, imparted with great skill in means, by an enlightened teacher on a particular occasion and for a particular person.

Then what are these elusive "gradual teachings" (or small truths for small minds)? They are anything that can inspire a person to think for themselves, and come to love and depend on reason. Intelligent humour, thought provoking stories, inspiring knowledge, mind-altering words and images, all these are the "first teachings", and never involve untruths or misleading blind alleys.

Needless to say, this form of teaching is not easy, and does not lend itself to organizations, large crowds, economics and timetables. It involves quality time spent between the enlightened guru and the student.

It is no different in Sokei Daishi's case. While the *Platform Sutra* which contains his teaching has chapters devoted to his religious career, to his answers to questioners doubts, to meditation and wisdom, to repentance, and so on - they are in the end none other than the one teaching of kensho (seeing into the true self-nature). Wise sages for twenty-eight generations in India and six generations in China, as well as the venerable Zen teachers of the Five Houses and Seven Schools who descended from them, have every one of them transmitted this Dharma of kensho as they strove to lead people to awakening in Shakyamuni's place devoting themselves singlemindedly to achieving the fundamental aim for which all Buddhas appear in the world. None of them ever uttered one word about the Western Paradise, nor preached a single syllable about birth in the Pure Land. When the students who came after them began their study of the Way and took it upon themselves to read the *Platform Sutra*, none of them was ever reduced to becoming a wild demon. On the contrary, it matured their attainment and enabled them to grow into great Dharma vessels. So please, Master Ko, stop whining about the *Platform Sutra*.

It is because of misguided men like you that Nankai Soho of the Yuan wrote:

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

The *Platform Sutra* is not mere words. It is the principle of Bodhidharma's 'direct pointing' that has been transmitted from patriarch to patriarch. It is thanks to it that great, venerable masters in the past like Nangaku and Seigen cleared their minds. After them, it cleared the minds of their disciples Baso and Sekito. The spread of the Zen school today throughout the world is also firmly rooted in this same principle of direct pointing. Indeed, is it possible that anyone in the future could clear his mind and see into his own nature without recourse to this same direct pointing?

These words of Nankai Soho represent the accepted norm in Zen temples and monasteries everywhere. Yet there is Master Ko, ensconced in some remote temple, giving forth with those partisan hunches of his. The one is as different from the other as cloud from mud.

Since some people are naturally perceptive and some are not, and some have great ability while others have little, there is a correspondingly great variety in the teachings which Buddhas impart to them. Buddhas work in the same way that skilled physicians do. A physician does not set out when he examines patients with just one medical prescription already fixed in his mind; since the ailments from which they suffer vary greatly, he must be able to prescribe a wide variety of remedies for them.

Take, for example, the desire for rebirth found among followers of the Pure Land school. Shakyamuni, the Great Physician King who relieves the suffering of sentient beings, in order to save Queen Vaidehi from the misery of a cruel imprisonment, converted her to firm belief in the Pure Land of her own intrinsic mind- nature by using good and skillful means which he devised for her particular situation. It was a specific remedy prescribed for the occasion and imparted to Queen Vaidehi alone.

My comment:

Note especially:- "Pure Land of her own intrinsic mindnature" - not a Pure Land after death. Note also:- "It was a specific remedy (my italics) prescribed for the occasion and imparted to Queen Vaidehi alone." That is, the Buddha did not teach it to large masses of dull-witted beginners indiscriminately.

Abrupt teachings vs gradual, verbal vs pre-verbal, exoteric vs esoteric, first vs last teachings. All this does not, and should not mean lies vs truth. Better small truths than small lies. "Gradual teachings" refer to small truths, imparted with great skill in means, by an enlightened teacher on a particular occasion and for a particular person.

Then what are these elusive "gradual teachings" (or small truths for small minds)? They are anything that can inspire a person to think for themselves, and come to love and depend on reason. Intelligent humour, thought provoking stories, inspiring knowledge, mind-altering words and images, all these are the "first teachings", and never involve untruths or misleading blind alleys.

Needless to say, this form of teaching is not easy, and does not lend itself to organizations, large crowds, economics and timetables.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

It involves quality time spent between the enlightened guru and the student.

Men like Shuko, not having attained the truth of the Buddha's wonderful skillful means, cling mulishly to the deluded notion of a Pure Land and Buddhas which exist separately apart from the mind. They are incapable of truly grasping that there is no such thing as a Buddha with his own Buddha land, that the village right in front of them and the village behind them and everywhere else - it is all Buddha land. There is no such thing as a Buddha body either. South and north, east and west, all is the Buddha body in its entirety. Being incapable of truly grasping such truths, when Shuko heard a genuine Buddhist teaching which said, "you are separated from the Western Paradise by the ten evils and eight false practices in yourself," he was appalled because it did not agree with the conception of the Pure Land which he had erected in his own mind. He hoped that by roundly condemning it he could keep others from hearing or reading about it.

If we let Shuko have his way and keep beginners from reading the *Platform Sutra* on the grounds that it is unsuitable for them, then the *Kegon Sutra*, and the *Lotus, Nirvana*, and other Mahayana sutras in which the Buddha reveals the substance of his enlightenment, are not suitable for them either. I say this because the great master Eno, having penetrated the profoundest subtleties of the Buddha-mind, having broken decisively through the deep ground whence the ocean of Buddhist teaching finds its source, spoke with the same tongue, sang from the same mouth, as all the other Buddhas.

Furthermore, the *Kegon Goron* states that "aspirants belonging to the first class recognize the Buddha's great power, observe his precepts, and by utilizing the power of the vow working in themselves, gain birth in his Pure Land. That Pure Land is a provisional manifestation, not a real Pure Land. The reason aspirants seek it is because they have not seen into their own true nature and hence do not know that ignorance is in itself the fundamental wisdom of the Tathagatas - and they are thus still subject to the working of causation. The preaching of a scripture such as the Amida Sutra is based upon such a principle."

My comment:

"Aspirants belonging to the first class recognize the Buddha's great power, observe his precepts, and by utilizing the power of the vow working in themselves, gain birth in his Pure Land."

Recognizing the Buddha's great power means realizing the fact that there is no free will. Observing his precepts means living in awareness of the laws of cause and effect. The Pure Land is the bodhicitta mind, which gives one the confidence and resolve to cleanse oneself of all gross defilements. See here, even for beginners, there are no concessions made.

We may be sure if Shuko had seen this passage, he would have grabbed his brush and dashed off some lines about the *Kegon Goron* being unfit for beginners. The *Kegon Goron* is fortunate indeed to have avoided the blind-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

eyed gaze of the "Great Teacher of the Lotus Pond." It saves us having to listen to warnings about "giving it to people of small capacity," and "turning them into wild demons." Sohaku Daishi dwelling within the stillness of eternal samadhi, should be delighted at this stroke of good fortune.

Seen by the light of the true Dharma eye, all people - the old and the young, the high and the low, priest and laymen, wise and otherwise - are endowed with the wonderful virtue of Buddha wisdom. It is present without any lack in them all. Not one among them - or even half of one - is to be cast aside and rejected because he is a beginner.

Nonetheless, since when students first set out on the Way they do not know what is beneficial to their practice and what is not, and they can't distinguish immediate needs from less urgent ones, we refer to them for the time being as beginners. At that point, they read the sacred Buddhist writings and entrust themselves to the guidance of a good teacher and friend.

My comment:

Or, failing to find a good teacher and friend, they entrust themselves to the dictates of reason, which, in the end, is the only good teacher and friend.

Upon bringing the Great Matter to completion and fully maturing into great Dharma vessels, they will acquire a wonderful ability for expressing their attainment and, using that ability, will strive to impart the great Dharma-gift to others, holding Buddha-wisdom up like a sun to illuminate the eternal darkness, keeping its vital pulse alive through the degenerate age of the latter day. It is these we can call true descendents of the Buddhas, those whose debt of gratitude to their predecessors has been repaid in full.

But if they are compelled to practice the Nembutsu along with all other students of whatever kind and capacity on the grounds that they are beginners, we will have all the redoubtable members of the younger generation - those Bodhidharma praised as being "native born to the Mahayana in this land," people gifted with outstanding talent, who have it in them to become great Dharma pillars worthy to stand in the future with Tokusan, Rinzai, Baso, and Sekito - traipsing along after half-dead old duffers, sitting in the shade next to the pond with listless old grannies, dropping their heads and closing their eyes in broad daylight and intoning endless choruses of Nembutsu. If that happens, whose children are we going to find to carry on the vital pulse of Buddhawisdom? Who will become the cool, refreshing shade trees to provide refuge for those in the latter day? All the true customs and traditions of the Zen school will fall right to earth. The seeds of Buddhahood will wither, die, and disappear forever.

My comment:

While my regard for humanity is low in the extreme, I have a higher opinion of people than the Tibetan lamas do. I do not believe people are so stupid, especially the young, that they haven't the intelligence to see and enjoy the truth. My enlightenment did not come from gurus, scriptures, chanting mantras, doing prostrations, practic-

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

ing virtuous conduct, or sitting in the lotus posture. It came from having a human brain, the vital seed of Buddhahood. Everybody has this seed, but they smother it, cover it up, crush it to death with so much religious garbage.

Give me a person for a few years and I will help them to uncover their own Buddhahood. But let them become religious, taking on-board a thousand lies and justifications for their own inadequacy, and they will remain imprisoned within samsara for thousands of lives to come. Every person is only a hairsbreadth away from enlightenment, but religion tells you that you are a "beginner", and that you must learn all the scriptures, and so on, just so you can get to the first stage. The great gurus insist that after a lifetime of effort you may eventually attain their level! What a pitiful thing that would be! All that work, just to bury your own humanity.

"Beginners" invariably have more brains, more potential, than their so-called gurus. Such a guru only serves to cut-off the supply of valuable nutrients beginners need while they are growing. Nipped in the bud, their spirits destroyed, they end up as weak, unhealthy and stunted individuals for the rest of their miserable lives.

The young are like fully formed chicks begging to be released from their shells. All it requires is a helping peck from the mother to set them free. But the mother is scared they might die from the cold air, so lets them die lonely, trapped within their dark and suffocating prison.

I want these great and stalwart men to choose the right path. If, at a time like this, the golden words in the Tripitaka, all the Mahayana sutras which were compiled in the Pippali cave for beginners to use in after ages, if everything except the three Pure Land sutras is relegated to the back shelves of the bookcase and left there untouched, it will end up as bug-fodder, buried uselessly in the bellies of bookworms, no different from stacks of fake burial money left forgotten in an old shrine deep in the mountains - of absolutely no use to anyone. How deplorable!

My comment:

I hope "Poison for the heart" can be found on the library shelves, and that it is not hidden away in some obscure cupboard.

Those people mentioned before whom the *Meditation Sutra* says are destined for the highest rank of the highest rebirth in the Pure Land, those suited to read the Mahayana sutras, have now bitten the dust as well - they no longer exist. Shuko's commentary, in slanderously rejecting anything counter to his own notions, may be compared to the infamous Ch'in emperor's bookburning pit. The Ch'in emperor's tyrannical policies were totally at odds with the teachings in the Confucian classics and other Confucian writings. Resenting this, he had his Confucians buried alive and all their books consigned to the flames. What Shuko has done represents a catastrophe of similar proportions.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

The three Wu emperors undertook openly to suppress Buddhism. Shuko attempted to do the same thing surreptitiously. The former went about it publicly, the latter did it on the sly - yet the crime is one. But Shuko is not really to blame for his transgressions. He did what he did because he never encountered an authentic master to guide him and was unable to attain the eye that would have enabled him to see through into the secret depths. He did not possess the wonderful spiritual power that comes from kensho.

Yet Shuko is given as "an example for good teachers past, present, and future." People praise him as "foremost among the great priests of the Zen, Teaching, and Precepts schools." Can they be in their right minds!

The Zen forests of today will be found upon inspection to be thickly infested with a race of bonzes just like Shuko. You find them everywhere, fastened with grips of death to the "silent tranquillity" of their "withered-tree" sitting - and imagining that to be the true practice of the Buddha's Way. They don't take kindly to views which are not in agreement with their own. The Buddha's sutras they regard as they would a mortal enemy and forbid students to read them. They fear them as an evil spirit fears a sacred amulet.

Being foolishly wedded to ordinary perception and experience in the belief that it is Zen, they take offense at anything which differs from their own convictions. They view the records of the Zen masters as they would a deadly adversary and refuse to let students near them. They avoid them like the lame hare avoids the hungry tiger. When we have adherents of the Pure Land shunning and disparaging the sacred writings of the Buddhas, and followers of Zen out to slander them into disrepute, the danger to the Buddhist Way must be said to have reached a critical stage.

Don't get me wrong. I am not urging students to become masters of the classics and histories, to spend all their time exploring ancient writings, or to lose themselves in the pleasures of poetry and letters; I am not telling them to compete in these fields against others and win fame for themselves by proving their superiority. They could attain an eloquence equal to that of the Great Purna, possess knowledge so great they surpassed Shariputra, but if they are lacking in the basic stuff of enlightenment, if they do not have the right eye of kensho, false views bred of arrogance will inevitably find their way deep into their spiritual vitals, blasting the life from the seed of Buddhahood, and turning them into sentient beings destined for permanent residency in hell.

It is not like this with true followers of the Way. They must as an essential first step see their own original nature as clearly as if they are looking at the palm of their hand. When from time to time they take and read through the writings that contain the words and teachings of the Buddha-patriarchs, they will illuminate those ancient teachings with their own minds. They will visit authentic teachers for guidance. They will pledge themselves with firm determination to work their way through the final koans of the patriarchal teachers and, before they die, to produce from their forge a descendent - one person or at least half a person - as a way of repaying their deep debt of thanks to their predecessors. It is such people who are worthy to be called "progeny of the house of Zen."

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

I respectfully submit to the 'Great Teacher of the Lotus Pond': "If you wish to plant yourself in some hinterland where you are free to finger your lotus-bead rosary, droop your head, drop your eyelids, and intone the Buddha's Name because you want to be born in the Land of Lotus Flowers, that is no business of mine. It is entirely up to you. But when you start gazing elsewhere with that myopic look in your eyes and decide to divert yourself by writing commentaries that pass belittling judgment on a great saint and matchless Dharma-transmitter like the Sixth Patriarch, then I must ask you to take the words you have and shelve them away, far out of sight, where no one will ever lay eyes on them. Why do I say that? I say it because the great Dragon King, who controls the clouds in the heavens and the rains that fall over the earth, cannot be known or fathomed by a mud snail or a clam."

One of the teachers of the past said:

The 'western quarter' refers to the original mind of sentient beings. 'Passing beyond millions and millions of Buddha-lands [to attain rebirth in the Pure Land]' signifies sentient beings terminating the ten evil thoughts and abruptly transcending the ten stages of Bodhisattvahood. 'Amida,' signifying immeasurable life, stands for the Buddha-nature in sentient beings. 'Kannon,' 'Seishi,' and Amida's other attendant Bodhisattvas represent the incomprehensible working of the original self-nature. 'Sentient being' is ignorance and the many thoughts, fears, discernments, and discriminations that result from it. 'When life ends' refers to the time when discriminations and emotions cease to arise. 'Cessation of intellection and discrimination' is the purifying of the original mind-ground and indicates the Pure Land in the West.

It is to the west that sun, moon, and stars all return. In the same way, it is to the one universal mind that all the thoughts, fears, and discriminations of sentient beings return. It is thus one single mind, calm and undisturbed. And because Amida Buddha exists here, when you awaken to your self-nature the 84,000 evil passions transform instantly into 84,000 marvelous virtues. To the incomprehensible working which brings this about we give the names Kannon, Seishi, and so on. The uneasy mind you have while you are in a state of illusion is called the defiled land. When you awaken and your mind is clear and free of defilement, that is called the Pure Land.

Hence the *Kechimyaku-ron* says that "the Nembutsu practiced by Buddhist saints in the past was not directed toward an external Buddha; their Nembutsu practice was oriented solely toward the internal Buddha in their own minds. ... If you want to discover Buddha, first you must see into your own true nature. Unless you have seen into your own nature, what good can come from doing Nembutsu or reciting sutras?"

"Buddha" means "one who is awakened." Once you have awakened, your own mind is itself Buddha. By seeking outside yourself for a Buddha invested with form, you are proclaiming yourself a foolish man. It is like a person who wants to catch a fish. He must start by looking in the water, because fish live in the water and are not found apart from it. If a person wants to find Buddha he must look into his own mind, because it is there and nowhere else that Buddha exists.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Question: "In that case, what can I do to become thoroughly awakened to my own mind?"

What is that which asks such a question? Is it your mind? Is it your original nature? Is it some kind of spirit or demon? Is it inside you? Outside you? Is it somewhere intermediate? Is it blue, yellow, red, or white? This is something you must investigate and clarify for yourself. You must investigate it whether you are standing or sitting, when you are eating your rice or drinking your tea, when you are speaking and when you are silent. You must keep at it with total, singleminded devotion. And never, whatever you do, look in sutras or in commentaries for an answer, or seek it in the words you hear a teacher speak.

When all the effort you can muster has been exhausted, when you have reached a total impasse, and you have become like the cat at the rathole, like the mother hen warming her egg, it will suddenly come to you and you will break free. The phoenix will be through the golden net, the crane will fly clear of the cage.

But even if no breakthrough occurs until your dying day and you spend twenty or thirty years in vain without ever seeing into your true nature, I want your solemn pledge that you will never turn for spiritual support to those tales that you hear the down-and-out old men and washed-out old women peddling everywhere today. If you do, they will stick to your hide, they will cling to your bones, you will never be free of them. And as for your chances with the patriarchs' difficult-to-pass koans, the less said about them the better, because they will then be totally beyond your grasp.

My comment:

There is no excuse for the lie of "expedient means".

Hence a priest of former times said, "A person who commits himself to the practice of Zen must be equipped with three essentials. A great root of faith. A great ball of doubt. A great tenacity of purpose. Lacking any one of them, he is like a tripod with only two legs."

By "great root of faith" is meant the belief that each and every person has an essential self-nature which he can see into; and the belief in a principle by which this self-nature can be fully penetrated. Even though you attain this belief, you cannot break through and penetrate to total awakening unless fundamental doubts arise as you tackle the difficult-to-pass koans. And even if these doubts crystallize so that you yourself become a great ball of doubt, you will still be unable to break it apart unless you constantly engage those koans with great burning tenacity of purpose.

Thus it has been said that it takes three long kalpas for lazy and inattentive sentient beings to attain nirvana, while for the fearless and stouthearted, Buddhahood comes in a single instant of thought. What you must do is to concentrate all your effort on bringing your fundamental potential into full play. The practice of Zen is like making a fire by friction. The essential thing as you rub wood against stone is to apply continuous, all-out effort. If you stop when you see the first trace of smoke, you will never get even a flicker of fire, even though you might rub away for three long kalpas.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

Only a few hundred yards from here is a beach. Suppose that someone is bothered because he has never experienced the taste of sea water and decides to sample it for himself. He sets out for the beach but before he has gone a hundred paces he stops and comes back; then he starts out again but this time he returns after he has taken only ten steps. He will never know the taste of sea water that way, will he? But if he keeps going straight ahead without turning back, it doesn't even matter if he lives far inland in a land-locked province such as Shinano, Kai, Hida, or Mino, he will still eventually reach the sea. Then, by dipping his finger in the water and tasting it, he will know in an instant what sea water tastes like the world over, because it is of course the same everywhere, in India, China, the great southern sea or the great northern sea.

Those Dharma patricians who explore the secret depths are like this too. They go straight forward, boring into their own minds with unbroken effort, never letting up or retreating. Then the breakthrough suddenly comes, and with that they penetrate their own nature, the natures of others, the nature of sentient beings, the nature of the evil passions and of enlightenment, the nature of the Buddha nature, the god nature, the Bodhisattva nature, the sentient being nature, the non-sentient being nature, the craving ghost nature, the contentious spirit nature, the beast nature - they are all of them seen in a single instant of thought. The great matter of their religious quest is thus completely and utterly resolved. There is nothing left. They are free of birth and death. What a thrilling moment it is!

My comment:
Hooray!

The Tibetan lamas are just like old Shuko, blind old bonzes who lack the eye of kensho. Yet their only fault is that no-one ever suggested to them that truth might be important - they are innocent.

If you tell a lie, such as "there is life after death," or "this ritual will remove a lot of bad karma," then you are stuck with it. You can never then contradict such statements with truth while in the presence of those to whom you told the lie. Yet how can you avoid their presence? If you speak the truth, it is bound to filter out to them somehow, then both you and they will be in a horrible mess.

The method of the Buddhas is to mix both small and large truths (never lies) so that individuals can take what they can understand. This is the safest bet, for the dull-witted cannot be hurt by large truths - the dull-witted will just pass them over, and hopefully benefit from the remainder.

The truth must never be held-back, veiled or obstructed; not for any reason. A bright light or a loud bell can awaken even the dead.

If Hakuin and I can speak the truth as openly and clearly as we do, to the obvious benefit of the world, then why can't the Tibetan lamas or the Christian priests? They are as good as speechless because they have not penetrated to the heart of the Dharma. They remain mere parasites, blind and brainless worms.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Am I then a madman, for spouting my venom in this manner, condemning men to hell, who after all are "representatives of the Buddha"? I am either mad, or I am not. Is there a third category available to you with which to cope with me? Yes, there is the category of the unknown quantity. If you lack the wisdom to judge finally and truly, then the only option is to delay judgement. There is no shame in not making unnecessary mistakes.

Hope to hear your thoughts regarding this stuff, otherwise I'll see you in a couple of months or three.²⁶

Kevin

10 December 1990

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill 4101

Dave,

I'm thinking of going to the Maleny folk festival starting on the 28th of this month. Have you got Greg's address or phone number? I'll try and get in touch with him while I'm there.

I've been ringing talk-back programs on a regular basis lately. It really makes it difficult when people are determined not to listen to you. People have been ringing 4BC demanding that I be banned from speaking on air because I "put women down." I have repeatedly rang and explained that I do not need to put women down because they are about as low as they can get. My only aim is to help them.

It is clear to me that the "independent" woman has been deified by many men, who have failed at being men, and have fallen back into a respectful reverence for woman's deceptive confidence and security. They speak, almost with tears in their eyes, about "balancing" the masculine and feminine sides of the personality. They worship the woman who is strong and forthright on the surface, but, importantly, is feminine beneath. It is hardly surprising that they reel with terror when I disparage their God of Gods.²⁷

Kevin

14 December 1990

From: David Quinn
17 Broadwater Pde

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

Sandy Bay
Tasmania 7005

Hello Kevin,

I haven't heard from Greg for well over a year now. The last I heard was that he was travelling around Queensland with a puppet theatre company. It's possible, however, that he may be finished and is back living at Maleny. At the back of this letter I've drawn a map of his place in relation to the town of Maleny (from memory; no street names I'm afraid), and also I've written the address of his mother, if you want to contact her.

I actually heard you on radio the other week: "Religion, Art, and Imagination" on the ABC. You rang up and had a chat to Mr. Millikin (perhaps to prompt him into responding to your book?). What a joke of a show! Why do they bother "discussing" when they already know the answers?

My essays on women are finished, and are currently at the printers. My mind has entertained a giant debate about whether I should release them to "the public". For the trouble is that my life is in contradiction to what is expressed in the essays. I have been gripped by indecision for a while now, concerning this one point. Whatever good these essays might bring would only be undone when they are compared to the manner of my life. Hence, I was thinking that I would not release them until my life was in conformity with them – irreversible conformity. On the other hand, as you say, these essays need to be released now. The solution to this dilemma is obvious: I shall release the essays under a pseudonym. Thus the essays will represent my ideality - to which it is my sincere aim to bring into actuality, but which I cannot do immediately. Once I have reached irreversible conformity, then I will claim them as my own.²⁸

What of Gordon?

David

4 January 1991

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Dear Dave,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

I've just returned from the Maleny folk festival and I think I've really benefited from it. The experience has forced me to suffer, and again come to terms with how different I am and what I have to do. It is important to have things thrown into sharp relief every now and again, to make you choose out of pain, and get off the fence.

There were quite a lot of women at the festival that appealed to my animal and emotional nature. They were soft, warm, calm, sensitive, and caring. Of course, they were all brainless and deeply in love with equally brainless men. One such lovely woman even affectionately touched me on the arm, thinking me to be a normal person. This was terribly painful, being mistaken for somebody else - an egotistical moron. Painful also was the fact that this lovely woman preferred this Devil-man to myself, after all the hard work I've done to become a good person! Such is the dilemma of desiring both God and a woman's affection. You price yourself out of the market.

A woman will not approve of God, because God is against her. If she loves you it is the Devil she sees in you which she loves - the part of you she sees that makes her ego stronger, her confidence deeper, her peace more blissful, and her enjoyment more joyful. She loves the man who can make her forget her worries - her conscience. Thus she loves the man of wit, the man of music and poetry, the man of lies and flattery, the man who is dextrous and sensitive in all the ways of the ego, who has the right word and the right touch to alleviate her every smallest hint of pain or discomfort.

And woman doesn't necessarily want the best man, just as one doesn't necessarily want the very best television set. A man that will work in conjunction with, and who is supportive of her other attachments will suffice her. One that can distract for the specified period of time is all that is needed. Anything more would be superfluous and would only be creating complications.

All this was made painfully clear to me - again! Now once more I am filled with disgust upon the idea of seeking approval or appreciation from others, which is really seeking approval and appreciation from the Devil!

Here are some of my observations on the folk festival:-

The aim: To make everybody equal "folk", with no distinctions between good and bad, or right and wrong. What is more, to make all people emotional folk, whose values are obtained and transmitted through the mediums of music, dance, tee-shirt art, drugs, sex, love, and emotional and self-righteous poetry. Rational argument, philosophy and truth are definitely not folk traditions. There is much emphasis on vegetarianism, the environment, and a hypocritical kind of wholesome moralism in general. This is to help alleviate the feeling of guilt for being totally decadent and immoral and loving every minute of it. It is a desperate attempt to salvage

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

something they can believe is meaningful out of a life they believe is meaningless. They want to conserve the world so they can conserve their own pride (in not being destroyers) and also to preserve their hope for the future enjoyment of wine, women and song. That is, they are not serious about conserving the world. Their desire for world peace and environmental protection is only a tool of the imagination, to make the dream of life that much more enjoyable.

The women: Probably 30% of the women (at least) had long blonde hair, transparent steel blue eyes, no make-up, slight frames, pastel shaded tops - purple or orange, covering Indian style finely floralled dresses. Also, these women didn't seem to speak. I am sure their boyfriends must have had trouble telling them apart.

If the woman's hair was dark, she had big baby-doll eyes to make up for it. Ugly or unattached women would not dare attend this festival.

The culture: High-tech folk music is reverting to traditional instruments and rhythms: drums, sticks, didgereedoes, and yelling. The fashions are based on bright colours and bare skin. New years eve saw a pagan festival through the streets followed by a bonfire. This step back to the stone-age is regarded by folk gurus as spiritual.

The egos: Whereas most people are happy to be spectators, "folk" people have participation bred into them. If they are not singing or playing their many and varied instruments they are pontificating on aboriginal rights, flogging off their paintings, parading their clothes and/or bodies, reading their poetry, selling their jewelry, or dancing, kissing and hugging in the streets.

All this is purely and simply showing off how well you can cater for and please other peoples' egos. By putting your values and your strengths on display you conveniently flatter those who share the same values, and who respect egotistical strength. They will flatter you in return and seek your company. Thus all this activity is about attention-seeking and flattery.

Ego-experts have learned that only speakers are rewarded, not listeners. Only those who erect billboards and have large shopfronts will attract the buyers. Buyers like to know what they are getting; they prefer a shoddy product that has a circulation than an unknown quantity that nobody uses.

If not a single person buys a certain product then everybody steers clear of it. On the other hand, if a single buyer is absolutely in love with the product then it immediately takes on a significant value. This is precisely the reason why everyone is so concerned with finding themselves a lover - no matter whom the lover might be. For to have value in the eyes of others means to feel valuable, and have the invaluable self-esteem. So, it is not so much that this one person, the lover, thinks something of you, but that in being loved by just this one, you take on a value to the whole of society.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Yes, this is all basic stuff, but it serves to be reminded of just how basic it is.

One of the best selling books of all time, alongside the Bible, is called "Everything you ever need to know you learnt at kindergarten." I would put it this way: "Everything people know, or ever want to know, they learnt at kindergarten."

Yes, I felt totally alone, unwanted, useless, rejected, invisible, ugly, and inadequate. But if I didn't feel all these things then something would've been terribly wrong. For until one finally renounces the final shards of the ego one must always suffer these feelings, otherwise one is living in a fools paradise.

I saw Gordon recently. He said he basically agreed with Hakuin's words and my letter, but I don't think he really grasped it. I myself had to read Hakuin's teaching a few times before it really sank in. Also, Gordon is thirty nine and has a twenty eight year old, blonde haired, transparent steel blue eyed, nonspeaking de facto lover, so he is quite a way behind the eight ball. His intellectual understanding is good, but he baulks at judging the Tibetan lamas to be "wrong" or "evil". He still has the tendency of making excuses for them, to leave himself a way out. But I think he is slowly changing. He is aware of how difficult and how painful such a change is, so this is at least something.

By chance I ran into Greg at the festival. He hasn't changed much at all; he's running away from God as hard and as fast as he can, to keep at a safe distance.²⁹

Hope to hear from you soon,
Kevin

P.S

Trevor has gone back to his girlfriend in Holland. Tracey has gone to England.

10 April 1991

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Dave,

I am putting together a book of aphorisms and pithy observations which I am calling "Wit for Wisdom". It is not strictly a spiritual book, but is de-

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

signed to stimulate people's intelligence and courage, thus promoting them into the human realm, and once there to consolidate the position. As the title suggests I am concentrating on humorous, ironic and powerful thoughts.

I enclose about forty pages (I now have over eighty) which might stimulate you into penning a few yourself. Please send me the results so I can include them. Tell me whether you want them under your own name, or mixed-in with everyone else's. I have decided to present mine separately from the rest because I would like people to know my personality. I reason that if people know me personally then my words will have a greater impact.

Please don't take too long.³⁰

Kevin

26 April 1991

From: David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Hello Kevin,

I've changed address.

Included are a number of aphorisms which you may be interested in. Some more will come in the near future, depending on how quickly you want to bring out the book - is there time for another month of composing?

Have you received the Woman essays? Any comment?³¹

David

P.S

If you decide to use any of my aphorisms just scatter them about amongst the others, don't bother about putting them under my name.

- Woman wishes to wish away the differences between the sexes - but then, that is the nature of woman.

- Happiness is a full life; consequently, happiness is death.

- Society is the process in which everyone fights all battles except the one that should be fought.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

- Television is immortality - for it is impossible to die in front of one, isn't it?

- The ignorant are aware of many mysteries and understand everything else, whereas the wise are aware of one mystery and understand nothing else.

- In the past, the masses were ignorant and bored. With the creation of the media, the one has merely increased and the other diminished.

- The continuation and well-being of democracy depends upon the good will of the masses to ignore what really goes on.

- Democracy is like the "decent citizen" - it seems reasonable under reasonable conditions, but it can give birth to a tyrant.

- Totalitarianism is the masculine, democracy the feminine - both have their good and bad aspects, and both can be oppressive at times.

- Democracy is woman's greatest invention. Indeed, it even reflects her character: purposeless, irrational, subject to public opinion and passing fashions, rambling, confused, underhanded, scheming, in love with its own purity.

- The essence of the feminine art lies in totally dominating and manipulating the man's feelings so as to make him believe that he is the dominant and manipulating one.

- Man sees woman as mysterious only because he tries to use his reason to understand the stream of irrationality which is woman.

- A woman's chief pleasure consists of conquering man's irrationality with her own brand of irrationality.

- Woman's acting is so brilliant that man actually takes her seriously!

- Woman thinks: I have a right to be loved until I'm seventy.

- In the interests of equal opportunity, philosophic discussion should be forbidden to cows with lipstick.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

- A woman is humiliated to find her husband is having an affair. She says: "What nauseates me the most is the fact that she knows all about my life."

- Man: Does my salvation lie in her? Is she perfection? Is she the answer to my yearnings? ... No! I do not believe in it any more! Woman: You don't know how to love. Man: I see it as a lie! Woman: You don't know how to love. Man: I will never find my happiness in it! Woman: You don't know how to love.

- It is terrible to be alone, and it is terrible to be in love, but one is cheaper than the other.

- The overwhelming pain of loneliness; a mother smiles at her baby – watch out for the Devil!

- Woman says: men are like buses - if you miss one, another will come along in five minutes.

- Who'd want to be an adult in this world? The normal, relaxed, well-adjusted adult is constantly exhausting himself playing a thousand games - 250 of these are spent in frantic pursuit of what it wants; another 250 are spent trying to avoid what it does not want; a further 250 involve elaborate justifications, trying to give the whole process some semblance of respectability; and the final 250 entail the efforts of trying to appear normal, relaxed, and well-adjusted.

- A favourite game of woman is to invoke jealousy in her man by deliberately giving her attention to another man, only to come back, in time, to her man, to dote on him. She is never really interested in the second man, but affects interest, which easily fools both men. The second man is used by her as a device to revel in the pleasures of male manipulation. Both men are confounded, having their emotions pulled this way and that - but she knows what is going on.

- Nobody makes for a worse philosopher than does the physicist.

- Philosophical discussion between religious people is often a curious affair, and is always decidedly unphilosophic. Both parties to the discussion always seem to know what its outcome will be, and it seems their only function is to steer the conversation to that already known end. But such is the cowardly nature of the religious.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

- Where logic sees contradiction, reason often sees none.

- Nothing is more nauseating than the oft-repeated phrase "honesty about feelings". Honesty about feelings - who cares!

- The musician has power that politicians can only dream about.

- Egotism is the disease of the mind,
Society is the symptom of this disease.
Egotism gains substance through repetitious thinking,
Society is composed of routines.
Egotism is sticky with clinging,
Society creeps within tradition.
Egotism is deceitful by its very nature,
Society is corrupt to the core.
Egotism needs to be reassured of its significance,
Society created the media.
Egotism needs categories for its security,
Society has culture.
Egotism is a hell few want to escape,
Society is a hell many want to escape.
Why? The mother is more important than the child!

- A curious feature of modern society: how a person's character is perceived depends on the nature of his sex life.

- A woman's face is pure sex! Those red vagina lips smiling with eyes glancing up and down - she is forgotten, and pure sex is there to engulf you!

- In marriage, man seeks to shelve her to the back of his mind, whilst the woman wants to be at the front - thus begins the battle between two uncommunicative opponents which so characterizes marriage.

- The woman and the sage are forever diametrically opposed - each thinks the other lives a life of escapism.

22 May 1991

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

Dear Dave,

I have read your writings on women. I'll let you know the impression they made on me after my thoughts have bounced around for a while.

What do you think of all those one-liners? One must be careful not to be sidetracked from the infinite with all that plain witty stuff (as you will see it is) that virtually any one could write. Their value is no more than as tools for prying open closed-shut brains. They are small truths for those who aren't ready to face the big ones. I am finding it quite tiring to put these witty things together, they don't inspire me, they are so close yet so far away from God.

And what did you make of Celia Green? She is no world destroying conflagration, but it is encouraging to know that at least one woman thinks. She is a good role model for women, and heaven knows women need some. A couple of her books are "The Human Evasion" and "The Decline and Fall of Science". If you cannot get hold of the first book I can send you a few photocopies from it.

She certainly has a mind, but she hasn't negotiated the Barrier or considered too deeply what it would actually be like to live in the direct experience Truth. She speaks very little about life without attachments, and without love. Her words do not confront you with the terrible and the lifeless. She has a wealth of ideas, but eternity does not spill from her pages. She is preoccupied with seeing what is wrong rather than experiencing what is right. And of the falsities she does detect, she doesn't home-in on the essential ones - life, death, and consciousness. In this sense she is like Nietzsche in all his books except "Zarathustra", merely entertaining herself and showing-off her talents. One more person, human, all too human.

I too am more human than I would like to be at this stage in my life, and I am still haunted by women more than is good for my health.

I was eating a meal at the Hare Krishna restaurant in town the other day when the young woman behind the counter threw a consumptive stare in my direction. She looked like an angel, radiant skin, eyes that have never seen ugliness in this world, never blinked in fear or shame, eyes that flooded loving prayers upon me. What was she? ... this spirit of clear waters, alive as spring rains, light as mist, heavy as earth, age of mountain valleys, this oaken grace, movement of meadows, still as time, smile of sunshine, hair of autumn grasses.

Five minutes later I noticed her again as she smilingly greeted some customers. I almost died ... I'll swear she had horns and vampire teeth! Her eyes sparkled a sinister light, the light of a thousand lies; her skin shone with a rancid sweat, the sweat of dying souls; pupils darted, glanced aside,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

mind worked, lips moved, teeth flashed, and then a manufactured blush of humility - and of superiority also.

Terrible it is to see through a split in the curtain, the evil goings-on behind.

As I read through the correspondence we have had over the last few years I am struck by the sheer negativity of it. This is magnificent. Anyone else reading it would think that we must be extremely deluded to have so many pains and problems. But we talk about the reality of life, and our distance from God, in a genuine attempt to actually leave the world behind us. Religious people speak of heavenly bliss and peace in a cowardly attempt to cover up their inadequacy, not to mention their contentedness with their inadequacy. They will speak of what they want, but not of what is required to attain it. They are quite happy to shamelessly waste their few years on this earth dreaming of heaven. They have no sense of urgency.

A single beat of a butterfly's wings can be the cause of a huge cyclone. Likewise, a single enlightened thought in an individual, at the right time, can conceivably save all intelligent life in the Universe. And a failure of that individual to have that single enlightened thought can cause the destruction of all life in the Universe. Who is that individual? And when will that thought come? You could be that individual, and that thought could be the one you are having this instant! Or maybe you are not having that enlightened thought this instant? - dread the thought of it!

So a sense of extreme urgency must be with us every moment, ensuring that our mind is in as enlightened a state as possible at all times, so that the compounded consequences in the unforeseeable future will be as good as they possibly can be.

People fear urgency because it means one has to do something, in which case one is lacking something. For example, it is a matter of urgency that Saddam Hussein and his army is quickly put out of commission before they develop a nuclear capacity and reek even more havoc. But the peace protesters refuse to believe that people can be so evil, so prefer to do virtually nothing about the situation. They cannot believe that evil exists, because they might have to see it in themselves.

I have met a chap by the name of Dan Rowden through a talk-back radio program we both call (and have appeared on) occasionally. He is unemployed and is an amateur astronomer and poet. I include here a few of his poems for your interest. The last four are his most recent. He is quite interested in the infinite but has some strong reservations. Unfortunately, like most poets, he doesn't actually understand what he writes.

PERCEPTION (December, 1990)

"So many think it, therefore it must be true!"

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

But what place does Truth have in such a
crazed alchemy?

The final gold? Hardly!
A face lingers there in my mind, Galileo!
Yes, he knows!
To ask a sheep about Truth
Is to ask an insomniac
To solve a problem by sleeping on it.
Truth is a finished cross-word, some people
get there

While others find consolation in their fail-
ure,
Ah, sweet ignorance! "Near enough is good
enough!"

Is that a voice I hear? Aristarchus!
A choir! A choir of singularities.
The haunting strains of individuality.
Socrates! I didn't know you sang so well,
But oh, dear Ptolemy, you're rather out of
tune!

Luther! Such mellow tones no sheep was
ever heard to make.

Friedrich, dear friend Nietzsche although
your song is sweet

I fear the man at the organ has other ideas!
Alone we may well stand,
But if Truth is at our side
What real strength has the pain of solitude?

THE PIECES LAY BEFORE ME (March, 1990)

The pieces lay before me as if pleading,
That I should give this jigsaw some worthy
meaning.

This myriad of forms, confused with multi-
plicity

Did vex my soul, not revealing its simplic-
ity.

In search of answers then began a quest,
Through the mystic realms and philoso-
phers best.

Impaled on stakes of feeble truth and use-
less allegory,

To solve this broken puzzle is now the only
glory.

In deepest sleep and waking hours I go,
A hunter slowly stalking an imaginary foe.
Obsessed, in mute derision it's now I lie,
The only need to join the pieces, ere I die.
Then finally, in fulfillment, standing free,
I saw this complex, binding puzzle, was
me.

AUGUST (March, 1990)

The night air dew it greets the day,
And so, shall I?
The golden orb he spins his web
Where new cicadas fly.
The fig-bird calls, the shrike replies,
A leaf upon the willow dies;
A dove in quest of love believes
The hand of fate, which oft' denies,
And so, shall I?
From this cold time the star twins hide,
And so, shall I?
Orion's light it meets the morn,
But few know why.
Old men talk of days they've seen,
Their memory's heart forged deadly keen.
But young men dream, fine things they
glean,
A strength of hope that's never been,
And so shall I!

THE FUNDAMENTALIST (October, 1990)

Bound by guilt is he;
The preacher's tool; the layman's fool;
The living story of all things.
Immersed in mystery he be;
The prophet's friend; individuality's end;
A cancerous confusion it brings.
Untouched by Truth he lies;
The future's pain; the evangelist's gain;
Of wasted lives he sings.

ODE TO GALILEO (November, 1990)

Within my heart I see him now,
Galileo, old friend of Truth.
And still they of robes and vow
Remain ensnared in wisdom's youth.

Old friend you told what Nature gives,
Not mindful of the foe.
A soul whose righteous courage lives
As flames within the snow.
In life we seek, in death we know.
In life we sow, in death we reap.

In scorn you live, though hope not dead;
The withered rose may yet bloom and rise.
Your thoughts your own within your bed,
They live in God's own guise.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Of Truth you speak, (though yet unseen)
Above the throng of ignorance,
With wisdom's heart, eyes deadly keen,
Though not feeling its significance.

In life we seek, in death we know.
In life we sow, in death we reap.

But now! In fear and terror's hold,
No crime of greater passion be;
A voice is silenced, its heart rent cold,
Truth's face, not yet set free.

My friend with yours, my heart it lies
Though time, its favours be not sent.
A soul as ours it never dies,
Its earthly cause will be not spent.

In life we seek, in death we know.
In life we sow, in death we reap.

And now the seven trumpets sound;
The Lamb, he has returned.
But still I hear no church bells pound
With chords of wisdom learned.

But there alone within the crowd,
A man who knew your voice;
A man beneath religion drowned,
And yet, for him, no choice.

THOUGHTS ON TRUTH (1991)

How to love but not possess,
To teach but not delude,
To learn but not believe,
To speak, but not deceive.

Such are the pains of Truth.

How to die and yet know life,
To doubt and yet know faith,
To judge and yet know concession,
To soar and yet know possession.

Such are the vexations of Truth.

How to be but never exist,
To hold but never contain,
To lead but never impress,
To whisper, but never confess.

Such is the joy of Truth.

NATURE AND MAN (1991)

In all the known universe,
Change is the only constant,
Causality the only force,
Nature the only law,
Truth, the ultimate source.

In all the heart of man
Illusion is the only constant,
Emotion the only force,
Self, the only law,
Ego, the ultimate source.

THOUGHTS OF COALESCENCE (1991)

Majestic forest, heart of my heart,
Soul of my soul; such soothing comfort
Quells the deepest pains.
Creeping vines, breath of my breath,
Thought of my thought, what part of me
Was cradled in your peaceful youth?
Wandering mist, time of my time,
Kin of my kin, what eternal forces
Have shaped us?
Solemn coppice, song of my song,
Path of my path, what part of me
Shall be sheltered in your silent chase?
Sweet Nature, God of my God,
Cause of my cause, what pale illusion
Can hide me from your ceaseless will?

SINE QUA NON (1991)

Let us go forth and seek the truth!
Let us be shepherds and not just sheep.
Let us not be deceived by our own eyes,
Nor believe what we see in our sleep.
For God's sake let us use reason!
Let us not be consumed by our guiles;
Leave wanting and wishing to others,
For delusion abides in their smiles.
Let us not be a part of the haystack
But the messianic needle within;
Leave the illusion of life to the others
Who pray for the souls of their kin.
For man's sake deny not the truth!
Let us follow the path yet unworn,
For ultimate Truth is among us:
We are lifeless, yet never unborn!

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

I am occasionally going back to "Poison for the heart" and rewriting small parts of it. Could you please tell me which parts you think I should especially give some more attention to. That is, tell me which parts you found to be the worst.

Also, I am thinking of titling it "The Poison Sutra". It is after all the word of the Buddha. This will help to ensure its survival through time, but the heavy cost will be that it will be associated with traditional Buddhism and thus will turn a lot of intelligent people off. What do you make of it, when you weigh-up the pro's and con's? I am in two minds at the moment as the pro's and con's seem so equal.

I will conclude with a few short extracts from the Buddha's little known "Ultimate Extinction of the Dharma Sutra":

"When the Dharma is about to disappear, women will become vigorous and will at all times do deeds of virtue. Men will grow lax and will no longer speak the Dharma."

"When my Dharma disappears it will be just like an oil lamp which flares brightly for an instant just before it goes out. After this time it is difficult to speak with certainty of what will follow."

"Good persons will be hard to find; at most there will be one or two. Men will die younger, and women will live longer."³²

Bye for now,
Kevin

P.S

- What is Sue doing these days?

- Yes, take another month to write some aphorisms. Send up any good ones you have, but I am more interested in humorous ones for the book.

19 August 1991

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Hi,

What's happening? Are you still inspired by the infinite? Have you met anybody that makes you think that wisdom has a hope of surviving? Is the world proving annoyingly attractive at times? Have you managed to stop thinking about women?

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

It has been a while now since I read your booklet *Woman*. My overall impression ... a little wordy, but infinitely better than anything you find on library shelves, primarily because it actually says something worthwhile. I have read it once, and re-read some parts of it several times, but I do not feel greatly motivated to read the whole thing again. This either says something about your writing, or perhaps that I know as much about women as I want to know and am all too aware of the dangers of lingering on the subject of women. Probably both. Have you got a copy of the manuscript on computer disk? if not, can you get a copy from the typist? You can always rework it in future, as I plan to do with "Poison".

I particularly liked the insights regarding evolution, and the creation of the formidable psychological entity *WOMAN*. No doubt in fifty years or so some academic will publish a book with a few of these very same ideas and be hailed as a genius. On the subject of fame ... I have something to say about that shortly.

Your book had a very practical use a couple of months ago when I was sitting in the refectory at Uni talking across the table to a very attractive girl who had eyes that took up a good half of her face and begged you to fall into them. Danny came in, and seeing more into the situation than I wanted to see at that moment in time pulled a copy of *WOMAN* out of his bag, making a blatant display of the title in the process, and slipped it into my bag. That girl has never looked at me the same way again.

Speaking of Danny, after I showed him some of the anti-Christian leaflets I used to post around the Uni he decided to pen some himself. He ended up producing two leaflets, and pinned them up all around the Uni one week after the other. I told him that just two leaflets wouldn't have much effect and that I thought a more sustained effort was necessary. I suspected something, and very soon my suspicions were confirmed. As we passed a noticeboard one afternoon I spotted a reply to one of Danny's leaflets, written by some intellectual. Danny's eyes lit up. This was just what he had wanted all along. He was more interested in being noticed than in actually helping people to become enlightened.

Fame of any kind is dangerous before you are selfless enough to transcend it. People of some cultures dislike having their photograph taken because they believe a photograph takes away a part of your soul. And so it does. The moment you depend on being noticed, and on being either famous or infamous, your soul is snuffed out. This is always something to keep in mind when you write for others to read, and when you begin to live a public life.

I came into a great wealth today - the last installment of Hakuin's *Kaien Fusetzu*. I find writing so much hard work, and Hakuin does it so well, so I might as well regard his writings as my own and promote them also. I remember you telling me that you don't understand a lot of what he writes,

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

but it is not necessary to follow all that he says to feel the conscience-wrenching strength of his genuine heart. I enclose a copy.

I have taken to writing and collecting aphorisms. They say virtually everything that prose does, though in fewer words which are more potent and enduring. Unfortunately, most people don't believe you really mean something unless you write it in prose. But I'm not going to let that stop me. I mean what I write, so I'll write what I please. Prose has its place - these letters for example, but it is easy to write too much. Prose is a good human touch, for humans.³³

Hope to hear from you soon,
Kevin

8 September 1991

From: David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Hello Kevin,

Two years ago I sent off a flurry of despairing letters to you; and almost nothing since. But I think I've been silent long enough now. You show an interest about what's happening with me, where I'm at, how I've developed etc, so with this letter I will give an account of myself. By the end of this letter you will fully understand why I have been quiet in the past and why I will contrive so in the future. Also understand, that this letter is written as much for my own development as it is for your edification.

If there is a certainty in my character, it would be the fact of my weakness. I am weak - you know that, I know that. How much despair I've gone through over this point! When I saw how terribly I've been brought up - so aimless, purposeless, so lacking in perseverance, so thoughtless, so insecure - When I reflected on this, my mind would inevitably indulge in the pleasures of fatalism. Bad past; no future. I looked at the loftiness of Mahayana and then at the baseness of my character; it seemed to me that for me to strive to become a philosopher would be somewhat equivalent to a fifty year old paraplegic who smoked 100 cigarettes a day to strive for an olympic gold medal in athletics.

Oh, but I did try to ignore all this. I did say to myself: I can change and I will change. Unfortunately, this noble sentiment got overwhelmed by faulty methods. That is, my attempts at living philosophically were pretentious, dishonest, obscure, unrealistic, half-hearted - and bathed in igno-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

rance. Thus I found myself two years ago, around the time of our letter flurry.

If I were to describe the two years since, I would best perhaps say: very bleak and "moderately" liberating. A royal broth mixing in all the elements of despair, depression, terrible depravity and mindfulness, cringing insecurity, long periods of cow-like vacancies - all interspersed with occasional periods of lucidity and rational processes. It seems now that I've just lived through a nightmare, a nightmare of the sort lived through by one of those grotesque characters out of a Dostoevski novel. It really seems now so horrifyingly weird - the sort of thoughts and feelings one has in the hell realms.

Now, looking at myself, I think I've come out of all this relatively unscathed. To be sure, much damage has been done - but none of it, I believe irreversible damage. I've successfully crawled my way back into the human realm; and I more serious, more in line with where I'm actually at. And this is not just some strange whim, but is the result of the last two, three, four years. I believe I'm closer than I've ever been to really developing Bodhicitta. "The revolution of the mind and spirit" is happening - I will go all the way!

Of course, it has to be understood that, in terms of mental development, I'm still very much a Third World person. My reason has been shot to pieces, my concentration is almost non-existent, my ability to absorb new thoughts severely crippled. Added to this, my mind is still very sick - in terms of bad habits and childhood attachments and behaviourisms.

However, I have developed plans and will spend the indefinite future implementing them. This is the reason why I wish to remain silent for a time to come.

I said earlier that the nightmare of the last two years was also moderately liberating. By this, I meant I've been largely liberated from you. I am no longer and have no wish to be your disciple. In the past, being your disciple was a tremendous learning experience, and I'll be eternally grateful for it, but it also led to the disastrous situation of the disciple imitating instead of developing. Because the disciple has tremendous respect for the teacher, he too easily falls into the trap of merely wanting to gain favour in his teacher's eyes. I recognized this in myself long ago, and it was one of the reasons I came to Hobart. However, I still, since then, recognized it in me in everything I thought - it went very deep; my reasoning would not be my reasoning but your voice talking inside my head. My actions were judged not by my reason but by your values - and so on. The reason why I want to remain silent is that I don't want to re-awaken this attachment. My respect for you has not lessened, and I want to develop outside of this respect. Ideally, and this is my plan, I want to reestablish contact with you when I am truly a Zen Master of my own account. An equal, not a disciple; a two-way

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

spar, rather than one-way lessons. This may take a year, it may take twenty.

However, don't you stop writing to me! Don't take my silence as a lack of interest in Truth (for if that were to occur, I would tell you). Inspire me! Encourage me! Rubbish the world for me! Keep sending me material and new ways of looking at things. It all helps - I consider everything carefully whatever you send to me. It may be the difference between success and failure for me.³⁴

Looking forward to your next letter.

David

P.S

- Sue is now living in Brisbane, so you may get a visit from her sometime.

- I assume that we'll let each other know of any changes of address.

29 September 1991

From: Kevin Solway
PO Box 207
St Lucia
QLD 4067

Hello Dave,

Good to hear from you. Yes, imitation is a problem, and always will be until we reach perfect enlightenment. If nothing else there will always be the tendency to imitate that which you want to become, even if you don't imitate any particular person. Various forms of imitation are useful tools in the forward march to individuality.

Danny and I went into 4BC studios last week along with an academic acquaintance of mine to talk about evolution and creationism. It ended up being a discussion about the existence of God and the morality of believing things which aren't true just because they relieve pain. The host of the program was shocked to hear me say that I could prove that God didn't exist. He had never heard anyone make such an outrageous claim. Even the most eminent of learned men say that even if there is no evidence for the existence of a God, the non-existence of God can never be absolutely proven, so there is always a possibility that God exists, no matter how slight.

I argued that as all things have causes it is impossible for a God (which by definition is without causes) to exist. It was then put to me: "But that is just your theory. How do you know that all things have causes?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

"The reason all things have causes is because all things have parts, or attributes. The parts or attributes of a thing are causes of the thing itself because without parts or attributes the thing would not exist. Also, things can only exist relative to other things, so we again see a dependency, or causal relationship that is necessary for anything to exist. That is why all things must have causes. Do you understand?"

"No I don't" was the reply.

So much for reason.

I enclose some computer disks. If you meet people with computers they may like to take copies. I've given up trying to get "Poison" published through the normal channels. Most of the publishers I write to aren't even interested in looking at a few sample chapters. So I'm releasing it free via the computer networks. If people show enough interest then perhaps publishers might take notice. However, I'm not expecting people to show enough interest - not if my work is truthful. I'm thirty and look forty. The people say: "If that's what thinking does for you, it's not worth it!"³⁵

Bye for now,
Kevin

10 October 1991

From: Kevin Solway
PO Box 207
St Lucia
QLD 4067

Do you have any more aphorisms to send me?³⁶

Kevin

14 October 1991

From: David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Kevin: My mind is starting to show some life again, but still is sluggish enough not to be able to produce the sort of witty aphorisms you desire. Still, here are a few I've recently come across.

"Woman is clay, longing to become mire."

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

- Victor Hugo

Ayn Rand:

- Parties provide the chance for people to be even more aimless than usual.

- A man, conceivably, could adjust to the knowledge that he was at a higher level than those around him, although no rational man could possibly enjoy that perspective; but to a woman it would be unbearable.

- Romantic love is one of the few issues in life that I have no wish to argue about or even to explain. I know that the value of romantic love is not axiomatic, but that's almost how I want to treat it. (says Ayn Rand, the woman philosopher, who places reason as the highest of all)

- A rational process is a moral process. If devotion to truth is the hallmark of morality, then there is no greater, nobler, more heroic form of devotion than the act of a man who assumes the responsibility of thinking.

- Do you ask what moral obligation I owe to my fellow men? None – except the obligation I owe to myself, to material objects, to all of existence: rationality.

- They have taught man that he is a hopeless misfit made of two elements, both symbols of death. A body without a soul is a corpse, a soul without a body is a ghost - yet such is their image of man's nature: a battleground of a struggle between a corpse and a ghost, and they base their whole morality upon it. They call it a morality of mercy and a doctrine of love for man.

- The modern mystics cry: sacrifice is the essence of all morality, the highest virtue of man's reach. But this is the morality of death. It is your mind they want you to surrender.

- You who rebel against causality, your motive is a fraudulent desire, not to escape it, but worse: to reverse it.

- For centuries, the mystics of spirit had existed by running a protection racket - by making life on earth unbearable, then changing you for consolation and relief.

- Their magic tool is the blank-out. Their religion is the voodoo belief that nothing can come into existence unless thought about.

- Do you think your modern preachers are taking you back to the Dark Ages? They are taking you back to darker ages than any your history has known. Their goal is not the era of pre-science, but the era of pre-language. Their purpose is to deprive man the concept of objective reality.

- Make no mistake about the character of mystics. To undercut your consciousness has always been their only purpose throughout the ages – and power, the power to rule you by force, has always been their only lust. Make no mistake: the supernatural power that a mystic dreads, the unknowable spirit he worships, the consciousness he considers omnipotent is - yours.

- Faith in the supernatural begins as faith in the superiority of others.

- Every dictator is a mystic, and every mystic is a potential dictator.

- The mystic craves obedience from men, not their agreement. He wants them to surrender their consciousness to his assertions, his edicts, his wish-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

es, his whims - as his consciousness is surrendered to theirs. He wants to deal with men by means of faith and force. Reason is the enemy he dreads - to him, reason is a means of deception.

- The advocacy of altruism is the advocacy of murder: to destroy all that is good for the sake of a naught.

- There are two sides to every issue: one side is right and the other is wrong, but the middle is always evil. In any compromise between food and poison, it is only death that can win. You, who are half-rational, half-coward, have been playing a con game with reality, but the victim you have conned is yourself.

Myself:

- To trust woman is to betray oneself.

- Woman cheapens his thoughts. He knows this, but does not tell her – he buys her flowers instead.

- A man considers himself happily married when he can snuggle up to her warmth, without actually interacting with her. Thus he maintains a clean conscience.

- Woman is Mediocrity veiled behind illusions of greatness; Man is the seed of Greatness undermined by uncertainty. In the entire history of our species, woman has held the upper hand, but I vow some day that men will be liberated!

- Woman is a domesticated animal; the feminist has returned to the wild. The goddess has gone wandering, collecting a few bruises, developing a few survival traits. She is lost; the bed beckons her. She will soon return.

- The Christian lives in a nightmare and thinks it is a pleasant dream.

- Modern Society progresses, and its criteria is jest - it has progressed in jest. Modern man is now happier; he is more serious about his happiness – thus Society progresses, and it progresses in jest.

- An aristocracy concentrates all the power into one man; an aristocracy shares it out to a select few; a democracy, however, is most generous – the power is shared amongst the millions and millions of T.V sets.

- Art is to spirituality in the same way as a miscarriage is to a wild, fullyfunctioning human organism.

- The scholar labours meticulously for years on end to produce his masterpiece - which the thinker destroys with a single sentence.

- Art as parasitism: art needs convention, in order to feed itself.

- Art as parasitism: artists depend, for their existence, upon stunting the human brain.

- Artists take the mind back to childhood, and congratulate each other for a job well done.

- Artists never really exist - they are always in the future.

- Art comes from God, they say, And for its fantasies we humans pay.

- Artists destroy well-worn stereotypes, and think they have something to say.

- Christianity says, "Come, give up your reason ...", and Academic Philosophy says, "Go on, it's useless anyway".³⁷

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

24 January 1992

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

Dear Dave,

How have you been? Are you feeling middle-aged? Someone called me that the other day. I am still swimming upstream against the torrent, but I'm not sure I've been making much ground lately. I've been thinking more about things than infinite things. I'll fill you in on some of my recent experiences, you may gain something from them.

I met a chap at Uni a while back and gave him a copy of "Poison" to read. When he had finished reading it he handed it back to me, along with some notes he had jotted down on scraps of paper. I have tried to type out what was on those scraps to make it moderately readable. You will see the results of my effort below, followed by my reply to him.

Ian is about 35, a tutor in physics at Queensland Uni, and an ex-Christian. He has come to understand that people are in fact robots, fully determined by the environment, but chooses to call them "cybernetic systems". He understands that the things we perceive as real are in fact only models, representing associations, nothing more. Yet he disagrees with my "superhard determinism" and "theory of universal causation" as he calls it. He maintains that philosophical analyses of things based on causation, which I am so fond of, are not only unnecessary but mistaken. He says that I am setting up causation as an ultimate reality when it is in fact only a model, or a useful assumption.

It is clear to me that while Ian has a degree of intellectual understanding, he doesn't go beyond his "models". I am always telling Ian how the model of cause and effect is the only model that can effectively undermine all models. But of course, as you will see, Ian doesn't think we need to go beyond them, nor does he believe it is possible to do so. His understanding of Nietzsche goes something like this:

The Superman is the meaning of the Earth! Believeth not in them which speak of superterrestrial hopes. Orgasm is the greatest of all human pleasures: thus has Nature ordained! I bid you my brethren, seeketh to stimulate the pleasure centres of your brain by all possible means. And, if by some electrical or genetic means you are able to stimulate those pleasure centres without cease, then you will have achieved the highest! Then and only then will ye truly be Higher Men. Thus spake Zarathustra.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

11th December, 1991 Ian -----

My life - search for spirituality/philosophy - hermit dream - clash of traditions science-church. esp Plato (betrayal of Socrates?) Nietzsche Both timely -

Incidentally I think that Nietzsche goes way beyond Kierkegaard - not in cohesion of theory (eternal recurrence, self- overcoming), not in the things he adapted from Schopenhauer - but in the pure "poetic" force with which he understood the ramifications of science - especially evolution.

Oddly this force seems to be less clear today because: (a) it is less novel. (b) myths have grown up around it that have retreated. and (c) tolerance has been interpreted by the herd as relativism (as you point out).

I think that Nietzsche is much more forceful than Kierkegaard in seeing how this quantum leap in reason breaks with archaic mixed-up notions of spirituality. When Nietzsche says "spirit" he means the lion, the powerful machine, of brain and body. No more otherworldliness, no more talk of the lowly "physical" plane, but a reveling affirmation of the spirituality of blood, hair, bone, and flesh. Nietzsche is unique in this - Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard are plodding.

But apart from this always - I had a feeling that something was missing in science. Where previously there was purpose and ethics, modern science, unlike the beast that Nietzsche foresaw, had ripped open the machine and left only flailing wires shooting strange sparks of electricity - nihilism at its worst.

But still I had to face the hard truth - that there was no code by which to interpret God, spirit, purpose, path etc. This was much harder to face than leaving the herd to pursue "truth" - and it required a much greater integrity than leaving Christianity. It is hard to accept that all this spiritual gamesmanship was more to do ego than hard, hard, hard facts.

Now in this rarified - but hardly "lofty" atmosphere we can take another look at the inadequacy of science. Science is powerless to describe what we should try to achieve - you can't derive an ought from an is. This is what makes ethics such a lively topic for me - and this is why I find frank acceptance of this problem so refreshing. When I first came to this realization - I felt such a fool - and I felt so ordinary. That is, until I realized how rarified this atmosphere really was ... then I despaired.

We see the archer stretch the bow, but we don't see the force he applies. No one has ever seen "force". There are only associations. The "picture" of force (a vector) fits the data gained through induction. The model is contained in "the computer", (the modeling device, the cybernetic system that houses the model) and represents merely an association ... "causes" need

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

never be mentioned ... only associations and models based on assumptions (it should be noted that vectors don't work in relativity!). Please, don't be offended, but I feel that some work in maths, logic and/or physics would help you see this point.

It seems to me that you have hit upon a number of "truths" - but it seems to be in spite of you theory rather than because of it.

I like your arguments about: authority, will, ego, tolerance. But I think your theory leads you astray in the area of ethics. (I understand that your theory is shrouded in "teaching aids", but it is what you give me that I must work with. Furthermore, you can't always hide behind the irony of the teacher).

Indeed, I think you have interpreted even your own theory wrongly. If the ego is simply a functional creation of evolution then why must we go beyond it? I think that the simplicity of the function of ego - which can be paralleled with the simplicity of the pleasure/pain program - is at times inefficient. We can often do better if we ignore our first impulses and reason things out, but this does not show that ego and pleasure/pain are dysfunctional. In fact, I think they are essential to understanding how we function. It's just like the white man to move into new territory and to immediately start making the rules!

In ordinary conversation people use the words "know", "believe", "faith" in different ways - as you have picked up. They tend to say that they believe, only when they have faith, and not knowledge! Furthermore, in some circles, faith is seen as a good trait - as if self-deception is a required talent. But I think that irony over this point comes at too high a price. I see induction and deduction as the only valid paths to truth. When we use "intuition", we are using valuable heuristics, but we should always defer to logic. When we get too clever over this point, we start to generate confusions. It can take decades to see through these confusions and, in the end, we learn little more than if the master had said to us: "I have no authority other than induction and deduction." In one fell swoop the student understands, and will not be led astray (at least, not by the teacher.) The teacher is less of a hero, and more of a thorn - perhaps a resented thorn - but this is the price the teacher pays.

In logic, a necessary truth is one that cannot be false in any possible world. For example, "The moon is made of green cheese or the moon is NOT made of green cheese." This cannot be false. On the other hand, the statement "the moon is not made of green cheese" is a contingent truth, dependent on observation. I think your notion that everything has causes is contingent and false - but you also mix up some definitions of "cause".

Now smoking and lung cancer are correlated by experiment. But there is not necessarily an association between smoking and lung cancer. Yet Kevin says, "There is at least the association that an experiment has been

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

done which involves both lung cancer and smoking, thus they are causally related."

There are a number of "non-ironic ironies":

- "A wise person is worth more than a fool."

- "Physical health is correlated with mental health."

(In fact, I would conjecture that Weltenshaft and physical health are, on average, equally important for sanity!)

These would not be ironic except that the herd spends a great deal of its time avoiding them. Indeed, to even state these truths is a threat to the herd. Consequently, it is almost impossible to even think these truths, and it takes great integrity to face up to them openly and consciously.

But there is one ironic irony which requires even greater integrity than these. to understand it one must go beyond the hard integrity of the sages who have become infused with the life-blood of evolution. It is simply this: "Pleasure is good in its own right."

11th December, 1992

From: Kevin Solway (to Ian)

PO Box 207

St Lucia 4067

Ian,

In response to the notes you sent me:

The fact that all things must have causes is a necessary truth and not a contingent truth. For example, the truth "all bicycles have two wheels" is a necessary truth based on the fact that the word "bicycle" implies that the thing in question has two wheels. That is, we do not need to see the bicycle to know that it must have two wheels. Similarly, "a thing has causes" is a necessary truth based on the fact that the word "thing" implies that the thing in question has causes. And why? Because a thing can only exist relative to other things. For example, a thing must exist relative to an observer at least. This relation is necessary for the existence of the thing. But is this necessary relation strictly a cause of the thing? My definition of a cause is simple enough: a cause is something which is necessary for another thing to exist.

Now, regarding the experimental correlation between smoking and lung cancer, YES, there is definitely a direct causal relation between smoking and cancer. But by the same token there is a direct causal relationship between ALL THINGS in Nature. This is because all things are physically connected, yes, physically connected, by air, by space, by all kinds of ways. If things are physically connected then they must be causally related. Of course, I am using the word "causally" in its broadest possible, philosophical sense. My good health is physically connected to the movement of Pluto's atmosphere, and is thus causally related to the movement of Pluto's atmosphere. But I do not take it that the movement of Pluto's atmosphere is the cause of my good health in an everyday practical sense.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

To labour the point, the movement of Pluto's atmosphere IS connected to my good health, but not in any way that I currently perceive is useful to me in my efforts to maintain good health from day to day.

Regarding models of reality, of course cause and effect is a model, representing mere associations as you say. But this doesn't negate the usefulness and validity of cause and effect as a philosophical tool. Your concept "model" is itself a model representing mere associations. My point is that cause and effect is the only useful tool when it comes to successfully realizing the illusory nature of the tools.

Now onto the subject of evolution. Undoubtedly the ego has aided the survival of the species in the past, and has thus been favoured by natural selection. I do not say we must go beyond the ego, only that from my observations and reasonings I deduce that we must go beyond the ego if the species is to have the best chance of survival. Not that the survival of the species is my primary goal by any means; no, my goal in life, and in death for that matter, is the survival of wisdom. The survival of wisdom is aided by the practice of wisdom, which entails going beyond the ego.

Please note that this ambition of mine to destroy the ego is as much a creation of evolution as is egotism. Evolution, like white man, often moves into new territory and changes the rules.

Finally, I must point out that the sage does in fact have one authority higher than mere induction and deduction: he has Faith! He has faith in the truth he has discovered through induction and deduction, which is infinitely removed from mere knowledge. Faith makes the difference between having infinite authority and having none at all.

Infinite authority says: "Pleasure is good in its own right, insofar as it leads to wisdom."

That's all for now,
Kevin

I have also been talking with a chap who has recently moved into the house. He too understands that we are robots and function entirely by cause and effect.

But, when it comes to the consequences of this knowledge, and the renouncing of the ego, he backs down. He says that because the nature of reality is that all things are uncertain, then knowledge of the principle of cause and effect is also uncertain. He reasons that if he cannot be 100% confident in the principle of cause and effect then he is not going to base his life on it, and is certainly not going to try to convert others to it.

I will try to summarize his argument. He says that all knowledge is uncertain for two reasons: Firstly, he says that knowledge is uncertain because of the chaotic nature of reality - we can't get a grasp on things because of their infinite complexity. Secondly he says that even if we could know things we can never know whether we are knowing them correctly. We may be programmed to think that we are being logical when in fact we

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

are not being logical - so there is no way to know with certainty when we are thinking logically. We may think that one point of logic leads seamlessly on from another. Even more, we may think our whole philosophy is seamless and flawless, when it might actually be entirely groundless. In other words, if we can never know if the philosophy of cause of effect is ultimately true, then why put any value on it?

This is a very frustrating argument isn't it? It is also a very common one, so I thought I'd elaborate on it here. I put this problem to a couple of people I know who claim to have grasped an understanding of the Truth, and it completely stumped them. You could see the beads of sweat raising on their vexed foreheads.

I will deal with his second argument first; that of being unsure that our knowing is correct. For a person with imperfect logical thought processes, uncertainty should be a constant companion. To such a person I would say that life is simply a matter of doing your best, that's all. It's not a terribly complicated philosophical solution is it? What else can such a person do? Nature gives most of us no other choice. It must do. If something seems more reasonable than another, then you go with the one that seems more reasonable. And why? Because reason has value. But that statement itself requires further investigation, which I will go into soon. In any case, the philosophy of causation seems more reasonable than any other to a reasoning person.

Yet it must be said that "doing your best" can sometimes lead to knowing things with certainty and without error. If by some chance a person's logical thought processes were perfect, even for but a moment, then the person's reasoning for that moment would be perfect. Whatever knowledge issued from that perfect reasoning would also be perfect. Now, in that moment of perfect reasoning the person may reason that their reasoning is perfect, which would necessarily be a correct reasoning. So the person would be reasoning correctly, and would correctly know they were doing so.

Of course, the mere fact that a person thinks they are reasoning correctly does not mean they are reasoning correctly. But it does not logically follow from this point that if a person thinks they are reasoning correctly they may be mistaken. As we have seen above, in the case of a person having perfect logical thought processes there is no chance that their reasoning is faulty. People generally have a lot of trouble with this point of logic. They get confused between probabilities and particulars. In the general case, the chances are that a person may be wrong, but in a particular case there may be no chance that the person is wrong.

Two people may be absolutely certain that they know the ultimate Truth. One may be mistaken and the other may not be mistaken. But it does not logically follow from this that a person cannot be sure they know

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

the ultimate Truth. As stated, they are both sure, but only one them is correct.

The difficulty people have with this reasoning is that they cannot think of themselves as individuals, particular individuals. Their reality comes from probabilities, or numbers. People are afraid of making an individual stand because they know that everybody else thinks in terms of probabilities. My flatmate denies that his thinking on this subject is influenced by such crude things as probabilities and the opinions of others. He is a very logical person after all. But the herd mentality goes down deep. I know that he is afraid of losing all his happiness, which he would if he became a true individual. I know he is afraid of being hated by women. Naturally enough, his ego will not let him undermine the cornerstones of his strength and happiness, which is the herd.

Now, concerning the first point about not being able to know things, or get a grasp on them, because of the infinite complexity of Nature. Again, his thinking has stopped in the shallows. Things in the world are surely unknowable in the ultimate sense, but we can certainly be confident with our categories, because we jolly well make them up! Logical reasoning deals with categories, and because we nominate them we can know them with certainty. The philosophy of cause and effect is arrived at through such categorization, so, provided the reasoning is faultless, the result is also faultless.

Finally, why should we put ultimate value on reason and truth? Why not put ultimate value on ignorance and happiness? A nihilist is someone who sees that nothing has value so makes up values to suit himself. Is one who puts value on reason any better than a nihilist? The difference is a matter of degree. The only thing that separates a spiritual man and a nihilist is that the spiritual man puts more value on reason. Both choose their values on a whim and their values are arbitrary, but the spiritual man makes his choice with considerably less ego than does the nihilist. Importantly, it must be seen that the spiritual man's whim is directed by the same force as the nihilist's whim - the selfish desire to be free of pain. There is no shame in this. But the more spiritual the man is, and the lesser his ego, the purer his motivation and actions will be.

So, we have determined that the spiritual man is different because he puts more emphasis on reason, but why does he think reason is so important? I could posit all sorts of reasons about how reason promises the most lasting happiness to a desirous, reasoning soul, but in the end it is Nature that makes him think that reason and truth are the most important. Nature makes the spiritual man seek ego satisfaction through truth (which as it happens is destructive to the ego), and Nature makes others seek satisfaction through only a limited use of reason. Nature, too, has made the spiri-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

tual man want to convert the nihilist to seek satisfaction through reason and truth, and the nihilist to resist!

When I showed my flatmate what I have just written he said: "But what is reason? - it is totally arbitrary. Reason is whatever you define it to be, so why put so much value on it?"... No, reason is what the perfectly reasoning individual defines it to be!

My mind has been fairly poorly lately, and needed a holiday. So I took a dainty twenty-one year old girl out for the evening. ... Delightful ... I felt ... Nothing ... Her face ... was a vacuum ... But I made sure it won't happen again by telling her some of my ideas. The evening inspired a few of the aphorisms that follow.

By the way, if you want a bound copy of "Wit for Wisdom", all 200 pages of it, you will need to send me \$25 dollars to cover costs. I am sure you will think it is worth it.

- Reconcile: to make a right out of two wrongs.
- The reason I think women are inferior is that I judge them by the same criteria as I judge men.
- People avoid the truth to give themselves something to do.
- A man needs a simple woman to help him forget just how simple women are.
- Love essentially involves being responsible to make sure that another person does not get bored.
- A woman plays hard to get to distract a man from thinking that she will be impossible to get rid of.
- A woman will not make heavy demands on a man till she has trapped him.
- If a man knows not the bliss of being struck with a phenomenal love, he knows not temptation.
- Freedom from desire is usually but an avoidance of temptation.
- A man doesn't realize what a fool he is till he has someone to talk to.
- Romance is a war that is ended by a mutual declaration of love.
- The purpose of love is to ensure that even the strongest reproduce.
- If you go against the grain when young the grain will go against you when old.
- Men who love women have no respect for them.
- In marriage you sometimes have to sleep with someone whom you feel like killing.
- A gentleman is a man who will not squeeze a girl's hand unless he is prepared to marry her.
- There is nothing more intimidating to a man than a woman's desires.
- Men are more creative than women, especially in ending a relationship.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

- It is easy to be liked if you do not continually speak magnificent truths that everybody hates.

- It is easier to imagine a person is great if their behaviour does not continually remind you that you are not.

- If a girl can comprehend the word "soul" she is not beautiful.

- A man can accept his inferiority in various matters because his reason has sway over his feelings, but a woman must have none superior to her.

- To be popular with women, be sure never mention the fact that women as a class are less rational and hence inferior to men.

- No man fully resents knowing magnificent truths until it has cost him the affections of a woman.

- A man finds more joy in winning a woman's love than in being loved. To win a woman's love is to be rewarded with a priceless gift from an angel, but to be loved is to be used by a vain fool.³⁸

Hope to hear from you soon,
Kevin

10 February 1992

From: David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Dear Kevin,

Middle aged? Sometimes I feel so, sometimes older. Yet people tell me I look young for my age. This is probably due to my being immature and irresponsible. I am a child yet to be a man.

I was actually in Brisbane not too long ago. I did not come and see you, for the reasons outlined in my last letter, though it was tempting. As you know, Sue has been living in Brisbane for quite a few months now. Before she moved up there, she became pregnant through me, and consequently decided to move to Brisbane and raise the child by herself. I visited Brisbane in December primarily to assist her through labour, and am now back in Hobart resuming my hermitic self.

I found your letter most interesting as it dealt with issues that have long been in my mind. Ever since I read in "The Human Evasion" by Celia Green where she states that the highest philosophical realization is that of "everything is uncertain", I've been wondering: Is that really so?

As you say, this view is very common. Almost uncommonly uncommon. It is the religion of our times; UNCERTAINTY has replaced GOD,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

and like most political processes, where nothing changes very much except the faces, the new God has assumed all the responsibilities of the old: namely, that of undermining confidence in reason and individuality and the will to Truth. It is a disease, as irrational and harmful a disease as any fanatical fundamentalist fairytale. It shows yet again that we humans have no compunction about existing in fairytales - we merely demand "intellectually respectable", hard-to-dispute fairytales. And often not even this.

But first to Ian. In spite of your "tidying-up", I still found his notes irritatingly obscure, so much so that I initially wondered whether I could be bothered trying to get to the bottom of them or not. I don't think he understood your book at all. But he nevertheless felt he should try and respond in some clever manner - all in the interests of not appearing stupid, I suppose. The whole tone and structure of his notes reminds me of the bloke who typed up my "Woman" essays - he sent back my manuscript covered with comments scrawled in red ink, comments which were at best outrageous, just bits and pieces of abuse (there's no other word for it really) thrown up without explanation or context. If people are going to criticize they should really do it properly, and not just shoot down "straw men" of their imaginations.

Ultimately, the question is: Is Ian interested in Truth or not? Or is he really interested in his protecting his view of himself as being a hard-nosed scientist who has outgrown idealism? If it's a case of the former, then why isn't he jumping up and down with joy at the thought of cause and effect, which at the very least promises to produce much intellectual fruit, let alone the key to Ultimate truth? Why does he need to fight against it, when it should seem to confirm to him what he already professes to know: namely, that things are not ultimately real, being merely "associations and nothing more"? At the very least, the concept of cause and effect would provide for him a whole new angle on things, and promise further to integrate what he already knows into an intelligible whole. Why does he treat it as if it were a threat?

I think that there are two main reasons for this. Firstly, he simply hasn't grasped it yet. It seems that his notions of causality are very much trapped in the scientific framework. Thus, causality cannot be conceived of apart from mechanics - causes are "forces", "energies", "momentums", "collisions", "laws of Nature", etc. As he points out, these are constructions of the mind in an effort to deal with phenomena. But he goes on to reason that since these are constructions and not ultimately real, cause and effect must be ultimately unreal.

A scientist will never accept a "causal link" until they have viewed it under a microscope!

Because all our perceptions are perceptions of appearances and associations, we can never, as it were, close the gap between two "events". No

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

matter how minute our frame of reference, we will never catch such an animal as a "causal link". To a mind that depends on capturing and caging the world into a network of concepts, this can be a very disconcerting thing. Because Ian cannot conceive of a direct causal link between things, he automatically assumes the very existence of cause and effect is in doubt. His error lies in doubting cause and effect itself, instead of doubting his notions of cause and effect.

But really, he wouldn't need the tool of cause and effect if he truly believed that everything is a "model representing mere associations, and nothing more". Indeed, if he diligently followed through with all the implications of this, he would become enlightened in no time at all. But, as you say, it all comes down to whether you do believe there is life after death, the death of all models. Here lies the real reason for his reluctance.

His spirit is broken - or as the world would have it, he has matured. He used to be a Christian, that is, an idealist, but can no longer believe in idealism. His "models" now provide him with the necessary confusion to find refuge in. His so-called integrity at "having faced the hard truth, that there is no code to interpret God, spirit, path, purpose, etc" is in actuality a relief; it is a relief to be no longer passionate about a spiritual ideal. So then, Kierkegaard is a plodder, because he merely keeps prattling on about leaving the herd in pursuit of truth. But this, this business of being an individual, is just spiritual gamesmanship for the ego. Nietzsche is much more with it, as he doesn't believe in petty idealism - no, he urges the opposite: the elimination of all idealism in an orgy of irrationality.

Having straightened all this out, Ian now throws himself into "ethics", like all mature adults should, and since he no longer believes in anything, the whole "problem of ethics" takes on a perplexing vitality like never before. Clayton's spirituality: the spirituality you have when you don't have spirituality.

All is most clearly revealed in his highest wisdom - "Pleasure is good in its own right" - which really means: "I can no longer understand the notion of suffering for an ideal".

His fractured spirit is something his ego wishes to avoid at all costs, and this avoidance is expressed all throughout his notes. He becomes the tutor, the academic, almost a professor, hinting at some hidden wisdom that poor Kevin is not yet privy to. A little bit more maths, Kevin, and you'll get your theory straightened out. You have some good ideas, but I have to say that you have a long way to go. You haven't even realized that rarified atmosphere; how far you are from the lofty heights!

In short: irritating, poetic cleverness; all too common.

Your flatmate poses a far more interesting and difficult problem. He maintains that all knowledge is uncertain as we can never be sure whether we are reasoning correctly or not, that reason is ultimately arbitrary. I dare

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

say that had you suddenly turned around and confronted me with this problem, I too would have had a stumped forehead vexed with sweat. For one as dull of wit as I, this problem is subtle indeed.

As you say, this view that "all knowledge is uncertain" is common - indeed, it positively characterizes the Western philosophical thought of the last couple of centuries or so. The whole issue has been rattling around my head for some time now; your letter gives me the chance to articulate some of the fruits of this labour. I will use your flatmate merely as a focus for my arguments. With the little information you gave, I am in danger of misrepresenting him. I have no desire to criticize someone without good reason, so what follows is merely an attack on a very common view.

Further, if one is to answer this problem then it should be done thoroughly. The resolving of this issue is crucial; otherwise it can so very easily sap the spirit of strength and lead it to stagnation. It is important to determine exactly where this whole view is coming from, so I will have to go into points which seems obvious. Thus, your patience is needed.

"Reason is totally arbitrary. Reason is whatever you define it to be, so why put any value on it?" This seems an extraordinary statement from someone who utterly depends on reason in order to perform the slightest action in the world; from someone who depended on reason to build up his skills, his personality, his speech and knowledge; from someone who would be totally imbecilic without it.

To say reason is totally arbitrary is to say that it is indistinguishable from nonsense. To say reason is totally arbitrary is to say that a contradiction is equivalent to a non-contradiction. Only a thoroughly insane person could "believe" this. In every possible manner, your flatmate's whole life contradicts his "reason is totally arbitrary".

Reason evolved as man's major tool for dealing with Nature. It expands knowledge of what causes what; it enables him to deal with circumstances, present and future, in a flexible manner. Thus, at the very least, reason has an intimate relationship with Nature.

Reason must necessarily presuppose the principle of cause and effect. Science could not make a single solitary step without presupposing it. The very success of science and technology suggests that cause and effect and Nature are inseparable. It doesn't prove the universality of cause and effect, but it does at least demand that if one is to disbelieve in cause and effect then some pretty powerful evidence would be needed.

Since you describe your flatmate as being very logical then he should know that the actual logical step is the very opposite of being arbitrary. Indeed, it is the most precise: a logical step is either completely correct or completely incorrect, never inbetween. There is no mystery to the logical step, be it induction or deduction - it is none other than the relating of two previously unrelated strands of information (associations) via the sharing

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

of a category. It is all above board, in plain view, with no hidden factors to upset the apple cart. If there be any uncertainty in a conclusion, then of course it must come from any uncertainty in the original strands of associations and premises, and not in the logical step itself.

Your flatmate may suggest that this is where "arbitrariness" comes into play. All the materials that reason manipulates, the strands of associations, are subject to the whims, values, and prejudices of the reasoner. For example, an historical account of some event must necessarily be a non-objective, hence arbitrary, account - depending on one's whims, values, and prejudices; certain things are emphasised, others ignored, etc.

Yet not all knowledge is subject to such relativity. An historical, or scientific account, must necessarily be a fiction. But the fact that there can be no objective historical account is certain. Here is a certainty which relativity or perspectivism by definition cannot undermine. Similarly, when one reasons about "things" and whether they have causes or not, one steps outside the whole domain of relativity. Indeed, the principle of cause and effect underpins the very notion of relativity.

As you say, we can be certain of our definitions precisely because we make them up. For example, I would define the "universe" as being utterly everything. I would define ultimate truth as being that which is everywhere and everywhen - it would have to be at least as large as the universe, and at least as pervasive as the universe. That is, ultimate truth would have to be one, eternal, unchanging, and boundaryless - anything less and contradictions would arise. I would then examine the universe to discover what it is that seems to be constant everywhere and everywhen, and this seems to be "change". So then I think to myself: "If I understand change, then I understand everything". And so on.

Furthermore, there are certain "necessary truths" which, as Ian points out, must necessarily be true in all possible worlds. For example, "free-will" is an impossibility no matter whether things in the world are caused, uncaused, or a mixture of both. Another, the mind can only perceive "appearances" and not "things-in-themselves": this must necessarily be true no matter how demonically our brains are programmed.

In any case, your flatmate's demand that he be certain of "cause and effect" before basing his life upon it, is the same as demanding the fruit before planting the seed. Truth and certainty comes later, not necessarily at the beginning.

To say "all knowledge is uncertain" is the equivalent to saying "enlightenment is a myth". Is enlightenment a myth? Your flatmate wouldn't have a clue. Indeed, no man can answer this question with certainty until he becomes enlightened himself! So, at the very least, unless your flatmate is a Buddha, his view is premature.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

And where did this "all knowledge is uncertain" come from? Out of the blue? Or as a product of reasoning? Either way, he cannot be certain as to whether it is actually true or not. If it is a product of reasoning, then a whole network of assumptions, premises, and logical steps comes into play, all of which, by his reasoning, becomes uncertain. He may have started off with certainties, or what he considers to be certainties, in order to reach his conclusion; but alas, the conclusion immediately undermines itself. Thus he is forever destined to be uncertain even about this view that "all knowledge is uncertain".

The statement "all knowledge is uncertain" is by definition irrational, since it cannot be supported by reason without falling into contradiction. It does not follow from this that "therefore some knowledge must be certain", but it does mean that he cannot believe his "all knowledge is uncertain" with certainty. Certainty may be possible after all.

Your flatmate may accept the above arguments and yet argue: "Even so, everything the understanding process understands, my mind is capable of doubting. Precisely because my mind can entertain doubts about everything, I will never be certain as to the truth of my knowledge."

This, possibly, is where your flatmate is ultimately coming from. He would not doubt that reason is non-arbitrary in an everyday practical sense, but as far as ultimate issues are concerned, nothing is certain.

This is a most interesting view. It is also a potentially self-destructing view. The mind could become absorbed in a particular line of reasoning, and it may reach a conclusion with the conviction of absolute rational certainty; but the next moment the mind moves on, frees itself from the rational network just inhabited, looks back at the conclusion just reached and promptly doubts it. Conceivably, the mind could go on like this forever, in a continual looking over the shoulder in an effort to doubt its latest reasonings.

But this is merely a habit, and an irrational one at that. The mind is capable of wonderful imaginings. It can build constructions that have little to do with the rest of reality. Equally so, it can construct "doubts" that have no validity. A person who seriously entered into this habit is in danger of undermining his mental faculties.

The irrationality of doubting in this manner lays in the fact that all doubting depends on certainties for its existence. The very process of the mind doubting necessarily depends on its conviction in a certainty lying elsewhere. The whole basis of your flatmate's uncertainty rests on the conjecture that our brains may be programmed to never be able to reason perfectly (combined with plenty of ability to deceive us into thinking otherwise). This is a conjecture with no basis to it. There is no evidence for it. Thus, by the same reasoning, it could equally be the case that our brains are capable of reasoning perfectly.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

Your flatmate should, if he is consistent, doubt, say, the geometrical proof of Pythagoras's Theorem. A more seamless logical proof one could not get! Yet, according to your flatmate, some hidden factor could exist to falsify it. On what basis? A conjecture? To doubt a perfectly seamless proof such as Pythagoras's Theorem is to doubt the mind's very ability to recognize objects and definitions. This is the road to imbecility on the boat of groundless conjecture.

All this strikes me as an attempt to avoid reality. To any genuine soul with a thirst for reality, the conviction "all knowledge is uncertain" would be intolerable - not mere despair, but absolute agony. Only two possible futures await such a soul: an all out drive for enlightenment; or a quick exit into insanity.

To be able to exist with the conviction "all knowledge is uncertain" and to make one's way about the world as if nothing were seriously amiss, indicates a strength so extraordinary that it could only come from one who is mentally dead, indifferent to Truth.

A nihilist is one who stops short of pushing his investigations to the very end; or else is a common indifferent atheist who likes to stick interesting labels upon himself. The former may be someone who is simply lacking in faith that Truth can be a reality; or he may be someone who has always harboured a secret longing to be free of philosophical thought and gets out at the first respectable opportunity.

The holder of the view "all knowledge is uncertain" is like this; he reasons: "I love my life, my habits, my comforts. Serious philosophy can only lead me away from these things, therefore nothing is certain."

The will to Truth is the crucial thing. Such a will can only but expose the inherent contradiction involved in the reasoning: "All things are uncertain, therefore cause and effect is uncertain".

To say all things are uncertain is to say that we can never be sure of seeing things as they really are, which is to say we can never see things as they really are. This is to say we can only ever see deceptions because of the distorted programming of our brains. This is to say we can only ever see appearances because of this distortion. This is to say that all things are relative, which is to say all things have causes.

Thus, if "all things are uncertain" is certain, then "all things have causes" is equally certain. Causality does not depend on uncertainty, but uncertainty depends on causality.³⁹

David

P.S

I'll send up some money for "Wit" in a couple of weeks.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

13 March 1992

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

Dear Dave,

Have you got, or can you get a copy of your "Woman" manuscript on computer disk (5 1/4" floppy) in Ascii format (ie, plain text, without special codes). If so, I will be able to convert it into a computer program which will receive wider distribution.

Dan Rowden and I have decided to start-up an Atheist Society. I enclose a copy of what our goals are and a questionnaire we are asking interested people to complete. We want to make every effort to ensure that the society remains hard-hitting and uncompromising. I'm not sure how long I will remain associated with this thing, as I know it will go downhill with time as it attracts more members and inevitably becomes more democratic and unoffensive. Nevertheless, I am prepared to put in enough work to kick it off because I think the Atheist Society represents a stimulant pill that society needs. It represents intellectual discernment - unheard of these days - which is an ideal after all, as weak as it may become.

While we get it off the ground, and maybe forevermore, membership is by contribution, so if you can part with any amount to help cover our costs (photocopying etc) it is much appreciated - if you would like to damn yourself along with us.

Many people are at my heels about my continually referring to "masculine" and "feminine" qualities of personality, and "the spiritual man". They tell me I am being sexist for implying that masculine qualities belong to men and feminine qualities belong to women. I beg your pardon I say to them, I never said anything of the kind. I use the word "masculine" to refer to the numerous and complex qualities of mind and behaviour most apparent in the male of the species, certainly not to imply that they belong to men. I refer to "the spiritual man" because "the spiritual person" does not convey my message. If a person is spiritual, they are by that very fact a man, in the sense that they exhibit the very best of the masculine qualities, whether they be male or female by sex. This kind of "man" is very far indeed from being a person.

This is all very straightforward, so the cause of their displeasure must lie deeper. And the cause is simply this: nobody wants to see any difference between the sexes. Or if they are brave enough to see differences, they don't want to see any difference in value. They believe that if there is

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

no difference in value between masculine and feminine qualities, then why have words for them? Why bother to even recognize their existence? To do so would be to construct unnecessary barriers!

Well, as far as I'm concerned masculine qualities have infinite value, while feminine qualities have no value whatsoever; so it is in my interests to draw a sharp distinction between them. And because masculine qualities are found mainly in men I will continue to use the words "masculine" and "man" - if only to challenge people to take a look. Yes, to invite people to take a look, and see how different men are from women; to challenge people to consider that man, on the whole, is not a woman. No, I will not use some word other than "masculine" to describe strength, dynamism, courage, nobility, rationality, consistency, and depth. For to do so might incline us to overlook the main repository of these priceless treasures - men.

Women then say to me: "But all those qualities you mentioned, like strength, courage, and depth, are just as much, if not more the domain of women than of men". And so I politely inform them that it is precisely because they lack these qualities that they believe they already possess them.

"But women do not agree with you!"

Tough! It was never my intention not to offend anyone.

Now, on to the subject of your last letter. The whole subject of "knowing things" is so awkward that I try to keep it as simple as possible. That is why I settled on the argument of "the perfect reasoner" which kills the whole philosophy of uncertainty with a single blow. The problem is, of course, that a person has to have an intelligent, courageous mind to see the truth of my argument, which means that my argument is of little use. So be it.

I gave your letter to my flatmate to read and he said he would write a reply to it. He hasn't done so yet, but his response goes something like this: Yes, I am fully aware of the contradictions inherent in my argument. I am a hypocrite. His point is that he doesn't see an alternative. In other words, he is intellectually uncertain that all things are uncertain but has to settle on some certainty or other for practical purposes, for the purpose of living. So, on a whim, and he settles on happiness (though he baulks when it comes to admitting this). And he obviously feels that the idea of the certainty of uncertainty gives him more happiness than the idea of the certainty of certainty. In other words, he is just cowardly, no more, no less.

He is your classical nihilist, as I discussed in my last letter. His whim, and his certainty, is based on ego rather than a relative absence of ego. As I say, it is a matter of degree. Because his ego is relatively strong he has a strong need of pleasure. Reason destroys pleasure. So he reaches the conclusion: "why put total value on reason if values are but a matter of whim?". Someone with a less of an ego would say: "I must put total value

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

on reason if I am to be happy" - and this thought is their downgoing. They will become Buddhas.

On the same subject I had a discussion with someone a few days ago about the existence of God. I told them that I can easily prove the non-existence of God. They told me that they had studied philosophy at Uni last year and it was shown that it was impossible to prove or disprove the existence of God. So, I painstakingly explained how if a thing existed, then it must be a thing (by definition), and that all things have causes (things they exist relative to), so something without a cause (God) is impossible. The person replied that there are things beyond our imagination, so how can I say that! When I said that a thing is a thing whether it is beyond our imagination or not, and that the only thing that is not a thing is Nature, the person scooted off on their bicycle. And I'm sure that girl liked me for a while there too.

I haven't heard from Sue, but I would be interested to see her (and the reincarnation of David). Would she mind if you gave me her phone number?

Bye for now,
Kevin

- THE ATHEIST SOCIETY -

The Atheist Society is a socially concerned organization. It consists of individuals from various academic and social backgrounds, each having a knowledge of the nonexistence of God and an uncompromising rejection of all concepts of God, be they metaphysical or socio-political in nature. Members of this society do not adopt a noncommittal, agnostic viewpoint and are therefore openly anti-religious.

The following is a brief outline of the basic principles and goals of the Atheist Society:-

1. To seek the truth in all things.
2. To uphold the principle of intellectual freedom and to encourage freedom of thought and expression both within educational institutions and the broader community.
3. To actively and publicly seek to debunk religious and philosophic mythology using rational and reasoned argument.
4. To uphold the value of truth and reason in all intellectual pursuits and to restore pragmatism to its rightful place within these pursuits.
5. To encourage intellectual discernment and to expose the falsity of the modern nihilistic philosophy of relativism.

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

6. To challenge any social tradition which is founded upon superstition or false concepts.⁴⁰

11 April 1992

From: David Quinn
3/73 Augusta Rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Dear Kevin

The argument of the "perfect reasoner" may demolish the philosophy of uncertainty, but the trouble is one has had to have experienced perfect reasoning in order to grasp it. For the average nihilist, the argument holds no water. One can only appeal to their conscience by pointing out the contradictions of nihilism and uncertainty.

I really don't think that women are at all concerned about whether the sexes are different or not. To them, the whole issue is irrelevant - for they know full well that, in the end, only woman exists. What is called "man" is but an appendage of her; man is the rib of woman. Women are quite happy to emphasize differences one moment, and extol sameness the next. One minute man is the powerful romantic hero, the next he is a poor imitation of woman - only woman exists and all other views are to protect and further this. A coin has two sides - men can prattle on all they like about how the side of heads is different or the same as that of tails, but she knows that it is all one coin. And the coin is woman.

The Atheist Society sounds interesting enough. I want to know more about it. What will be its structure? Will there be meetings? Newsletters? Group activities and all the other stuff that is normally associated with societies?

Sue is waiting to hear from you. Her number is *** ***,⁴¹

Hear from you soon,
David

4 May 1992

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Dear Dave,

My latest project is a compilation of the best writings about women, that is, the evil that is Woman. I am including sections from Kierkegaard's "Banquet", essays from his journals, as well as some of Nietzsche's aphorisms, a collection of quotes from a wide variety of sources, Schopenhauer's essay "On Women", bits from Ramakrishna, Plato, and Freud, my chapter on women from "Poison", and am also thinking of including your "Woman - An Exposition for the developing mind". The combination, packed into and displayed from a single computer program, should be truly awesome.

But I would like to see you give "Exposition" one more editing. I have spent the last couple of days typing it into my computer, so I now have it in a form which is easy to edit. While a lot of the short essays in part III are sharp and punchy, the same cannot be said for significant stretches of text in the first two parts. If you can force yourself to do so (I know this will be a real drag) can you mark-up a copy of "Exposition" with pen, send it to me, and I'll make the changes to the text I have stored in my computer. If you mark which bits you want deleted, sentences you want moved or new sentences inserted, words changed or deleted, paragraphs moved, spellings changed, just mark them clearly with pen, and it will be easy enough for me to make the changes on the computer. There is a lot of good material there, but I think it needs to be made a little more readable. Try to cut down on wordy sentences, and words with a lot of syllables, if you can. Also, I notice you use the word "entirely" a lot. I know these are annoyingly small things, but if changing them can help a message to find its way more deeply into a person's brain then I reason that it must be worth it.

I laughed when Sue told me about the person who typed up your "Exposition" ... finished the job and then went to Melbourne for a sex change! The most amazing thing was that it was a male who wanted to change into a woman, and not the other way around.

The Atheist Society experiment seems to be going quite well. We are trying to make people think and to expand their horizons, and I think we are achieving that so far. We have signed up Phillip Adams, Robyn Williams, and Karl Kruszelnicki as honorary members. We have sent offers to Stephen Hawking, Richard Dawkins, Steven Jay Gould, and Ben Elton. They may not be true atheists in the pure sense of the word, but we feel that having these well-known public figures publicly display their atheism will make people think a bit. These people are regarded as role models by many. Their public declaration of atheism will force people to consider the question, the either/or question, the question whether God

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

exists, or whether he does not. The challenge is unmistakably thrust forward.

I have decided that even if we attract no members at all, and are unable to engage anyone in meaningful discussion, and cannot make a single person understand cause and effect, then we have still done good in the mere fact of our existing. Yes, just existing, and advertising our existence, and signing up famous people as honorary members has an impact on the way people think. I think it might just give them a shove in the direction of the human realm. It might just awaken one or two dialectical processes in their brains.

For my part, I will make it quite clear, publicly clear, that I am fully aware of the limitations of the Atheist Society, and that I do not pretend that we are trying to teach people ultimate truth. One does not teach ultimate truth to young children - to do so would not only be cruel, but in vain. One has to devise interesting games for them, so that the field will be prepared and cultivated for the seed which will follow. Especially, one does not suggest or incline the children to believe that their games are the end of the story, but rather that their games are just a beginning. Now, with regard to the Atheist Society: one does not teach ultimate truth to fools.

To do all this without causing harm to people, or to the truth, is what Buddhism calls "skill in means". I will simply have to make sure my skill in means is good enough.

Sue tells me you are working on a new project - some kind of a dialogue. I would be interested to know more. I hope you find time to re-edit "Exposition" while you are doing this. The sooner I can release the program the better.

How are things with you? Write soon.⁴²

Kevin

7 May 1992

From: David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Dear Kevin,

Yes, I will re-edit "Exposition" and get it up to you as soon as possible. To tell the truth, I have never been happy with it and have been wanting to rework it for a long time. Your request will give me the incentive to do it.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

My new project, the one that I am currently working on, is not a dialogue but a series of essays. In essence, it will be on real aspects of spiritual living. Just as I used the subject of women in my last project, this time I will use Western Philosophy/Christianity/the world - though this time it will be even more personal than "Exposition". I think it is important to reveal the way in which the world goes about philosophy, as it entraps too many intelligent people. As such, I will go into some detail with the arguments of "freewill vs determinism", the God question, uncertainty, science, the insidious nature of Christianity, the way the world does all it can to prevent spirituality etc. I plan this project to be perfectly written, so that not even a comma will be out of place. It will be like music, designed to snare poor unsuspecting egos.

After this, I have an idea in mind for a work in dialogue form. The title will be something like "Who is the sage?" I will present four alternative philosophies as bluntly as I can, presented in the form of conversation covering a range of topics, mostly dealing with how to live. I'm thinking that I would try to present each philosophy as objectively as I can, that is, I will use no literary tricks to bring any one of them into favourable light. That is, I want the reader to decide: Who is the sage.

As for me personally, I'm just plodding through each day in my seemingly never-ending struggle in dealing with spiritual demands. What is demanded of me and what actually exists in me produce no end of games, much of which is by no means entertaining. I'm edging forward though.

When I look at your life and your determination to make yourself known, whether it be through the Atheist Society or your book or whatever, I confess that I am rather dazzled by it all. That authority you possess is not mine yet - consequently, the fear and trembling of it all still overwhelms me. Just the very notion of having a belief, a belief which is more important than life or death, is something that is so alien to everything I have been brought up to be. To even come to terms with the thought of spiritual living is enough to make me gnash my teeth. But everything is seeping in. It will seep in.⁴³

David

19 May 1992

From: David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Dear Kevin,

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

Here it is, "Exposition" reworked. In fact, I've given it the complete overhaul. You were right in your criticisms - much of it was sloppy and poorly written. I believe it is now greatly improved.

I would like a printed copy of the final text; the only trouble is I cannot spare a cent at the moment. Is it possible for you to organize a copy for me, and I'll reimburse you when I can? Just stick it in the old binding. I've decided to discard the pseudonym and claim the damn thing as my own. The time is now ripe to do so.

How's the Atheist Society going?⁴⁴

David

4 July 1992

From: Kevin Solway
PO Box 207
St Lucia 4067

To: The Courier Mail

Dear Sir/Madam,

We live in a matriarchal society, not a patriarchal one. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. We live and have ever lived in a woman's world, and the Universe revolves around it - woman makes sure of this.

Women are totally unconcerned about the needs and values of men. More precisely, women cannot comprehend the needs of men because, on the whole, they lack the capacity for rational thought. Moreover women will never become aware that they are so lacking, precisely because women cannot reason sufficiently to do so.

At best, woman is doomed to see man as no more than a poor copy of herself - herself being the genuine article; at worst she vainly believes that men exist purely to serve her. She does not and cannot recognize the many and unique strengths of men, and the countless great achievements that blossom from his discerning mind and valiant heart.

Men are virtually entirely responsible for the creation of science, philosophy, literature, all the great works of art, and all the useful inventions of mankind. In short, men are largely responsible for everything of value we possess today.

There is no doubt that women are masterful with emotions, but the emotional world is a hateful, harsh, and evil world because it is devoid of reason and truth. Only men know this, and real men steer well clear of it.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

To have a balanced set of emotions is to compromise with evil. To be a woman is to be tolerant of everything, including untruth.

Women think emotions are of ultimate value because women are irrational. But one cannot tell women this. In fact, the reason men stop talking to women once the courtship stage is over is that women are incapable of conversing with men about important subjects, and men can endure trivia for only so long.

Indeed I have not written this letter for women, for feminine women at least, because one would have to be a fool to try to reason with women.

Yours faithfully,
Kevin Solway

PHILOSOPHY EXAMINATION

Question: What is a justification of a belief? Can any belief be justified? Discuss.

I have studied the literature on this subject with care and have rejected it as being unworthy of attention. Any good idea can be expressed simply and in few words. The literature on the subject in question is bloated beyond all dignity and deserves to have the air let out of it.

Having no alternative open to me, I am forced to present my own thoughts on the matter.

A good justification for a belief is a good reason for a belief. A good reason for a belief depends largely on the kind of belief it is. There are two kinds of belief:

1. Beliefs about things in the world
2. Beliefs about universal logical principles.

Assuming that we value rational consistency (an optimistic assumption - concedo) then beliefs about the world are good if they are as rationally consistent as possible. It is impossible to achieve a perfect justification for beliefs about the sensory world because all such beliefs are based on other beliefs and these in turn are based on other beliefs, and so on. One will never reach a self-justifying belief within this sphere of finitudes. Even the belief that I seem to see something that looks white depends on many other beliefs, like the belief that I exist for example, which requires justification itself.

For beliefs about universal logical principles a justification needs to be perfectly rational and explainable. Such a justification can be perfect because the reasoning is based on a priori knowledge. That a bicycle has two wheels can be perfectly justified because a bicycle necessarily has two wheels.

But this is only drivel of the first water. If we remain on the level of the mundane intellect, the finite intellect, it is all too easy to pick faults in the above argument. For example, it is an a priori truth that there is no white

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

black. But the mundane intellect could point out that such a statement is based on a belief that white and black exist at all, which requires justification.

In such a painful manner we could go on forever. If we want to answer this question in a way that a noble and honest soul would find even remotely satisfying then we have to go far beyond the realms of academic philosophy - and into the Infinite. For a consciousness of the Infinite is required if one is ever to be able to truly justify one's beliefs, whether those beliefs be about things in the world, or in the abstract world of logic.

The reason is this: if a mind comprehends the Infinite and dwells in the Infinite, then its finite reflections are no more than fleeting patterns within its Infinite reflection. In this profound state there are no distinctions between types of belief. All beliefs arise spontaneously, as spontaneous as only Infinite thought and reasoning can be. Then, white is white because it is white and black is black because it is black. Likewise, some beliefs are true because they are true while others are false because they are false. Only an Enlightened, Infinite mind can reason thus, all others minds need, sorely need justification for their beliefs, because they have a false basis. That is, they have a finite basis.

And how does one attain an Enlightened mind? One follows the path of the mundane intellect deep down into the realms of universal logical principles, being slayed, oneself, as one goes. One comes to realize on a purely intellectual level that the universal logical principles validate the beliefs about things in the world (for it is a universal logical truth that beliefs about things in the world are imperfectly justifiable). Further, one examines, with heart, the belief in one's own existence. Then, if one is a brave warrior of the spirit, there is a breakthrough - and one negotiates the Barrier in an instant of time.

Clearly, a good justification can only issue from a good mind - and a good mind is exactly a consciousness of the Infinite for the reasons explained. This means that academic philosophy, being an infinity of finitudes, is based on blind faith in absolutely every respect.

This explanation of how beliefs can be justified was written out of a spirit of conscience rather than conformity. If I wanted standard academic philosophers to understand my argument I would have written a load of rubbish. If you, the reader, have any trouble understanding my seemingly religious figures of speech you may find that my essay on the mind-body question sheds a little more light. But then again, it might not. To experience light - one must have eyes.

Question: What is the mind-body problem and why is it a problem?

After surveying the literature on the subject of the mind-body problem I have been forced to the conclusion that the literature is worthless - other than in its possibly unnecessary value in revealing the worthlessness of many so-called philosophers. For something that is essentially a very simple problem, something that is not really difficult enough to justify the designation "problem", the academic philosophers have made very hard work of ac-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

complishing nothing. This is because academic philosophers, whether they know it or not, have an aversion to truth. If they did not have such a cowardly aversion, all their "problems" would be solved in an instant, dooming their "philosophy" once and for all to historical quaintness where it deserves to be (philosophy: a word borrowed from the Greeks and subsequently prostituted).

However, for the purposes of filling the space required of me ... I will fight back the nausea to mention some of the arrant nonsense that has been presented to us in the name of philosophy. But I hate to do even this, for the repeating of such juvenile slobber, even when only to cut it to shreds, tends to lend it credence in the eyes of the dull-witted.

But first, let me state what the "mind-body problem" is. It is essentially this: is the mind distinct from the body, or is the mind a part of the body, or the body a part of the mind?; and what significance does the answer, or lack of an answer, have with respect to the way we live our lives? Do we have a soul? Does some part of us live on when the body dies? Are we as much a part of Nature, and subject to Her laws, as are material things?

The reasoning I will put forward is simple enough, but if for an unforeseeable reason a person needs to see the same reasoning repeated elsewhere they can look to the writings of the ancient Buddhist philosophers like Nagarjuna and Candrakirti.

Things are either separate or the same. That is, to clarify and establish this truth, things are either separate, utterly separate and independent, or they are not separate, are dependent, and thus joined - or in other words, one and the same thing. For example, my hand is causally connected to the rest of my body, so it is not separate from my body, therefore it is the same as my body (though distinguishable to our consciousness for practical purposes).

Having established that things are either separate or the same it must be seen that nothing is separate. The reason nothing is separate from anything else is that all things are causally connected, or joined. Can anything exist that is not causally related to anything else? No, because inherent in the meaning of the term "existence" is the fact that things exist relative to other things. Things exist relative to an observer at the very least. If a thing is dependent on other things for its existence then that thing is causally connected to them and is therefore not separate. The only possible conclusion is that all things are the same, one and the same thing.

This immediately annihilates all dual notions of mind-body, meaning that the dualistic philosophers concerned have wasted their lives in a vain pursuit, which is a great disappointment to me. Put simply, if the mind was separate from the body then there is no way that the mind would ever be aware of the body or what it was doing.

The materialist theory of mind is far more in line with my conclusion of Infinite Unity. Specifically, the functionalist theory of mind shows the most promise as it deals with relationships (the abstract) rather than the simple units of the identity theory. But, simple as the functionalist concept is, it is too deep (deep means simple) for many contemporary philosophers. Let me

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

reveal the extent of their plight to help shed light on why the mind-body problem continues to be such a problem.

One argument against functionalism is that a functional device can have many different functions depending on how states are interpreted. The critics say that many interpretations are possible, which leads to absurd results, thus disproving functionalism. The point these critics fail to understand is that there is ever only one possible interpretation for any one state at any one time, because this interpretation is necessitated by the larger program. And that larger program is ultimately nothing less than Nature Herself. These blind critics cannot see the connectedness, and the deterministic nature of all things. Yes, Nature is the Grand Programmer, and all mind-programs are but a part of the Infinite Program of Nature. And it is this connection which may prove a stumbling block for the functionalists, who, to some degree are infected with the same disease as their critics - the disease of finite thinking.

So, in conclusion, the mind-body problem is a problem as long as we conceive of things as independent entities. Specifically, it is a problem if we conceive of mind as separate from the body. Yet even if we conceive of a mindbody (unit) the problem will reincarnate in a new guise because the temptation will be to conceive of the mindbody as separate from the surrounding environment. The barrier of finite thinking is difficult indeed to smash.

So, do we die with the body, or live forever? Indeed, we die with the body, insofar as a body can die ... for what is a body but one of Nature's breaths?⁴⁵

15 July 1992

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

Dear Dave,

I enclose a rough copy of your manuscript. You will notice that I have made quite a lot of changes. Most of these changes have been to the style, but I have removed or rewritten some of the parts I thought were unclear. You really should get yourself a computer. You would find editing much easier – and editing is probably 80% of writing. I think a manuscript of such material needs at least four or five drafts to become readable. Tell your parents that if they want you to achieve anything in life they'd better give you fifteen hundred dollars to buy a computer. They will only waste it on themselves if you don't.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

I found that I could cut out a lot of the words you used without any loss of meaning. When I cut several words out of a sentence I would often find that the sentence became too short. I would then look at the following sentence, remove unnecessary words and hey-presto I could join the two short sentences together into one sentence with twice the original meaning. This also improved the flow as you don't have to navigate as many punctuation marks to imbibe the nectar. Everything is closer together and you don't have to work so hard at remembering what you have just read and keeping track of the argument.

Yet I am still not happy with it. Even after I have had my go at it there are still intrusive paragraphs that don't belong, or belong somewhere else. There is still a lot of diverging from the case in hand which makes for difficult reading. And as far as I'm concerned if something is difficult to read then it is too difficult.

You would find this problem easier to resolve with a computer. To do a quality job the only alternative is to write on hundreds of scraps of paper and continually rewrite and rearrange the whole thing - which is so hard to do properly as to be impractical.

All the same I have released the new "Exposition" as part of the "Woman" compilation. It's not quite up to the standard of Kierkegaard's "Banquet" but should still have an impact.

The Atheist Society hasn't been doing much at all. In the first place real atheists are hard to find, and then once you have real Atheists there is no place to go but Enlightenment, so the activities are somewhat circumscribed. We'll try to get air time on Phillip Adams's "Late night live" and Robyn Williams's "The Science Show". It is an opportunity to say things in public that aren't normally said.

I have been strange lately (normal lately), chasing after aloof types of women again. Of course, my subconscious desire to be rejected (free) stops me from doing enough work to break the armour of such women. When I sense I am close to a breakthrough I back off and honour their pleas for me to go away. I'm not sure its doing me any good but I have to do it.

Sue might have told you about the compilation of love poems I have released as shareware. They have sprung from this same energy which has been possessing me in part of late. I am periodically falling from philosophic and spiritual idealism into romantic idealism. The relief is that it is still idealism, and as such is irritating and dynamic. That is, it dissatisfies and therefore impels one to reach for higher, more substantial, truer ideals. Romantic idealism can serve as a stepping stone between everyday brainlessness and the beginnings of thoughtful enquiry.

My flatmate and I are probably going to put out a kind of underground newsletter in the near future, so please send us articles and even any monetary support you can offer. We are going to hit things like overpopulation,

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

religion, feminism, etc. Why are we doing this you may ask? Again, just because it may do some good and I can't think of anything better to do at present.

I enclose a letter I recently sent to "The Courier Mail" and some essays I recently handed in for a philosophy examination. Use them to spark yourself up if you get sleepy. Incidentally, the two philosophy essays constituted 50% of the course, and they still gave me a grade of 6 (out of 7). "The Courier Mail" only published the first three paragraphs of the letter that follows.⁴⁶

5 September 1992

From: Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

This may be the hardest letter I have written. Something has changed in me. I have been made humble. I have hit something hard and solid and only my momentum has been enough to carry me through it. I have gone through it, but it is still with me, as when a car goes through a brick wall it will get a few bricks through the windscreen and a few landing on the seat. Plenty of dints and scratches and cracks, and one less brick wall - or one less part of it.

I am stretched to describe what has happened. I have faced something primal, not in the safe confines of thought, but in the vast ruthless battle-field of life. I sipped nectar in realms of permanent pleasure, made a home in the black flames of hell.

I have recently realized how shallow I am. I am shallow because I am not deeply immersed in fantasy. Because of my fear I flounder on the surface making foolish and undignified noises.

Zarathustra's last vice was supposed to have been compassion. I have many vices, but my biggest vice is probably my attachment to truth. Yet it dwindles.

My hatred for the herd is gone, and with it my love of truth. I can no longer look down on the masses. They are geniuses, Buddhas, truly they are. To choose to live in fantasy, success and failure, gain and loss, and be happy with all: happy in pain, happy in joy, and to live long and healthy, is surely godlike almost beyond comprehension. They feel themselves individual and whole, free as can be.

Godlike in a way I never was. I failed to be a god. For whatever reason my mind lacked sufficient resolve. Dreaming hurt me and I lacked the skill to dream hurt into happiness and health. As a last resort and in my wretch-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

edness I turned to reason, and had the gaul to disparage those who had succeeded where I had failed! What a miserable creature I am! I deserve nothing. Reality is truly a crutch for those who can't handle drugs.

So I went back inside to meet them again. I mean people, everyday people, gods. I awoke the "inner self", the old me who would be a god. He had been learning a lot all these years of watching. Now he could cut it with the best! Let it fly! Reborn! New world. New people. So different. Now I respect, truly respect my brothers and sisters, because I became one of them, for the first time since I was a young child became one of them. I felt their world, the power of the loins, primal genetic forces, the love of lies, the fear of anything even remotely true. I was there, let myself be there for what felt like the first time. I have always been honest, but never this honest, not so honest as to lie, and live in a world of lies - the normal world. Now my truths themselves became lies, that is, a category of lies, like something needed to make up a script. Real truth has no place in a script, or in a dream. This is how I lived. Now I respect.

I have always said that one's purpose in life is arbitrary; that it must be chosen on a whim. All except one or two choose as a goal happiness through fantasy. The exceptions choose happiness through reason alone. Both goals are equally valid. Now I respect.

Yesterday I met a woman in her sixties who told me about the criminals and general bastards and mad people she had slept with (and enjoyed sleeping with) when she was younger. She told me about how she married a multi-millionaire doctor for his money. She bore him a son and she left the child behind when she left after three years. The boy was physically and emotionally abused throughout his childhood which resulted in him having deep psychological problems for the rest of his life. She has no regrets. None. She has had an exciting and fulfilling life. She is an average person, no more no less. She had a goal and achieved it. I have a goal and work at it. I respect.

Do you know what I'm saying? Before now, all these things were thoughts for me. I knew them alright. I could feel them too, and experience them, but now I have entered into them deeper than ever. I am changed. I have been made simple. I have aged. I am no longer a spiritual man, philosopher, or thinker - not in any case. I am nothing. I have said this, but now I realize it more fully. This is something.

Going forward seems like retreat ... where have I heard that before? In a past life? What incredible loops we loop! Like a comet revisiting the same sun and being burned away just a little more each time (hopefully).

Having dismantled this pride, this pride in truth, there is a void in my soul. I have trouble motivating myself to do anything. I feel no sincere disgust nor any sincere love. I can generate no lasting passion. I realize more fully now how much my quest for integrity was empowered by my

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

ego. Not that it was much relative to others, but it was still a lot, which is becoming agonizingly clear to me as I try to live without it.

The fact is, if you strive for truth not a single person in the world will recognize or respect the fact. They have no reason to; especially women. How can this not be painful for a man? - when evolution has ensured that he has a driving primal desire for attention, approval, and affection. Perhaps Kierkegaard did not talk about suffering enough! And no one else was brave enough to broach the subject as compassionately and self-sacrificingly as he did.

Life can get lonely as you get older, into your thirties, and there comes a clash with the ideals you had settled on as a child. The higher you go, the more you must depend on help from above.

I saw Sue a couple of weeks ago and she challenged me that perhaps I have been wrong all these years in providing you with an object of attachment, in making myself available for use as a guru or father figure. She suggests that this very attachment may be a serious hindrance to your spiritual development. This is a valid criticism, but what can I say? I am not perfect. To the degree that we are not perfect we make mistakes and I am open to the fact that I may regularly be mistaken or blinded.

Life is exceedingly lonely when you decide to think, and it becomes very easy to project qualities onto others which would render them suitable to converse with. It is in the same way that a man will project intelligence onto a brainless dainty in order to believe that he can educate her, dignify her, and make her a worthy partner. If indeed I have tended to see you as more lofty and discerning than you are, then I think it has been only minimally.

Everyone desires a father figure, an authority. This is natural. Attachment is surely a problem, yet we cannot avoid authorities because genuine authorities are invaluable. A balance must be made. Until the moment of perfection arrives concessions must always be made to the ego, otherwise the truth of it will be denied - dishonestly and dangerously denied. He that cannot lie, knoweth not what is truth, says Nietzsche.

What are your thoughts on the matter?

What have you decided to do about your "Woman" essays? I'm afraid that nothing is safe if it passes through my hands. I have no respect for private property. Which reminds me, have you heard of a fellow called U.G. Krishnamurti (not J. Krishnamurti)? I was given a photocopy of some of his teachings recently and what he says is good quality. He regards the body as being the highest intelligence, no life after death, etc. On the whole, fairly down to earth. The photocopy I have is sold in specialist shops and is the photocopy of a book called "Mind is a Myth" (Dinesh publications). Unusual for a photocopy to be sold in the bookshops you

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

might think? Well, not if you read what is written on one of the opening pages: "My teaching, if that is the word you want to use, has no copyright. You are free to reproduce, distribute, interpret, misinterpret, distort, garble, do what you like, even claim authorship, without my consent or the permission of anybody."

This has inspired me to take the copyright notice off the writings I have released on the computer networks. I have replaced it with this message: "There is no copyright on this work. You are free to reproduce this work and copy from it all you please."

I have told you a little about the love poems I have been compiling. It is my response to the problem of bringing life to dead men. While the purpose of "Poison for the heart" is to trick people into becoming enlightened, and "Power words" is to trick people into beginning to think, "The love base" is to trick people into thinking about doing something. It introduces the ideal - the seed of discontent.⁴⁷

I enclose a selection of poems, including a few from Danny:

"The lover tells of the perfect beauty" by
William Butler Yeats

*O cloud-pale eyelids, dream-dimmed
eyes,*

*The poets labouring all their days
To build a perfect beauty in rhyme
And overthrown by a woman's gaze
And by the unlabouring brood of the
skies:*

*And therefore my heart will bow, when
dew*

*Is dropping sleep, until God burn time,
Before the unlabouring stars and you.*

"Even so came love" by J.R. Hervey

*Treading unknown ways and lovely be-
yond*

*All lonely dreams, 'tis Love herself I
see -*

*'Tis Love herself who pledges sanctu-
ary*

*In bosom quiet as a twilight pond.
Out of the unguessed deep the song is
blown,*

*And all earth's voices die. What shall
compare*

*With that by which all other things are
fair.*

*Who shall contend with Love's unrav-
aged throne?*

*As comes the moon into surrendered
skies,*

*Even so came Love to whom I yield me
now,*

*Deliberate hand and heart and dream-
ing brow,*

*And song sweet lips and beauty-
haunted eyes.*

"The caress" by Juana de Ibarbourou

*The soundless dusk was growing dim
in the midst of a sweet and quiet re-
pose,*

*and in the blue shadows of the bower
the pallor of moonlight filtered down.*

*Your hand, all nerves, was stripping
petals from the roses with restless
impatience, which at times the secret
impulse of a desire was urging.*

*And when you'd picked a white and
tender rose,
that was like a trembling bird
caught in your hand by chance,*

*with cautious step you drew near.
You gave me the rose with your eyes
and I felt the sensation of a kiss.*

[From] "A girl's hair" by Dafydd Ab
Edmwnd

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

*He who could win the girl I love
would win a grove of light,
with her silken, starry hair
in golden columns from her head,
dragon fire lighting up a door,
three chains like the Milky Way.
She sets alight in one bush
a roof of hair like a bonfire.
In summer she has on her head
something like the Golden Hillside.*

[From] "The dream" by Theodore Roethke

*I met her as a blossom on a stem
Before she ever breathed, and in that
dream
The mind remembers from a deeper
sleep:
Eye learned from eye, cold lip from
sensual lip.
My dream divided on a point of fire;
Light hardened on the water where we
were;
A bird sang low; the moonlight sifted
in;
The water rippled, and she rippled on.
She held her body steady in the wind;
Our shadows met, and slowly swung
around;

She turned the field into a glittering
sea;
I played in flame and water like a boy
And I swayed out beyond the white sea-
foam;
Like a wet log, I sang within a flame.
In that last while, eternity's confine,
I came to love, I came into my own.*

[By] Uc Brunec

*Love is a courteous spirit
Who lets himself be seen
Only in his semblance.*

*For he shoots his sweet arrows
From the eyes to the eyes,
And passes from the eyes to the heart
And from the heart to the thoughts.*

[By] Guido Cavalcanti

It was through the eyes

*That the battle came at first
And all my strength was at once broken,
And with the blow my mind was destroyed . . .*

"Nuptial Sleep" by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

*At length their long kiss severed, with
sweet smart;
And as the last slow sudden drops are
shed
From sparkling eaves when all the
storm has fled,
So singly flagged the pulses of each
heart.
Their bosom sundered, with the opening
start
Of married flowers to either side out-
spread
From the knit stem; yet still their
mouths, burnt red,
Fawned on each other where they lay
apart.*

*Sleep sank them lower than the tide of
dreams,
And their dreams watched them sink,
and slid away.
Slowly their souls swam up again,
through gleams
Of watered light and dull drowned
waifs of day;
Till from some wonder of new woods
and streams
He woke, and wondered more: for
there she lay.*

"Versicle" by Hugh McCrae

*I dreamt you were a dream,
And hardly breathed for fear
Of waking; ne'er to dream
Of you, again ... my dear ...*

[From] "The Kiss" by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

*I was a child beneath her touch, - a
man
When breast to breast we clung, even I
and she, -
A spirit when her spirit looked through
me, -*

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

*A god when all our life-breath met to
fan*

*Our life-blood, till love's emulous ar-
dours ran,*

Fire within fire, desire in deity.

"Stop, shadow of my elusive beloved" by
Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz

*Stop, shadow of my elusive beloved,
image of enchantment that I most de-
sire,*

*beautiful illusion for whom I happily
die,*

sweet fiction for whom I painfully live.

*If to the magnet of your graces, attrac-
tive,*

*my breast serves as obedient steel,
why do you capture my love in such
pleasure*

if you are to leave me later, fugitive?

*But you cannot boast, satisfied,
that your tyranny triumphs over me:
for though you have eluded the tight
noose*

*that encircled your fantastic form,
it matters little to deceive arms and
breast*

*if I fashion a prison for you in my fan-
tasy.*

"Summum Bonum" by Robert Browning

*All the breath and the bloom of the
year*

in the bag of one bee:

*All the wonder and wealth of the mine
in the heart of one gem:*

*in the core of one pearl all the shade
and*

the shine of the sea:

*Breath and bloom, shade and shine, -
wonder, wealth, and - how far above
them -*

Truth, that's brighter than a gem,

Trust, that's purer than a pearl, -

*Brightest truth, purest trust in the uni-
verse -*

all were for me

in the kiss of one girl.

"The Sleeper" by Dan Rowden

*As the eagle dreams of gentle winds,
And autumn leaves, the restful earth;
As the lover dreams of moonlit nights,
And empty pages, the poet's loving
hand:*

Thus, I dream of you.

*As a father weeps over the newborn
child,*

And a girl, her first sweet kiss;

As the thinker yearns for the key to life,

And weary days, the night's calm bliss:

Thus I think of you.

"Night Quest" by Dan Rowden

Though a tear have I shed

For every star that cuts through

The ebon void of fathomless night:

Still I love you,

*And forever will I search this velvet
host,*

For the sparkle of your eyes.

[From] "Dreams" by Michael Longley

Your face with hair

falling over it

was all of your mind

that I understood.

"A virginal" by Ezra Pound

*No, no! Go from me. I have left her
lately.*

*I will not spoil my sheath with lesser
brightness,*

*For my surrounding air hath a new
lightness;*

*Slight are her arms, yet they have
bound me straitly*

*And left me cloaked as with a gauze of
aether*

*As with sweet leaves; as with subtle
clearness.*

*Oh, I have picked up magic in her
nearness*

*To sheathe me half in half the things
that sheathe her.*

"Her gifts" by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

*High grace, the dower of queens; and
therewithal*

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

*Some wood-born wonder's sweet simplicity;
A glance like water brimming with the sky
Of hyacinth-light where forest-shadows fall;
Such thrilling pallor of cheek as doth enthral
The heart; a mouth whose passionate forms imply
All music and all silence held thereby;
Deep golden locks, her sovereign coronal;
A round reared neck, meet column of Love's shrine
To cling to when the heart takes sanctuary;
Hands which for ever at Love's bidding be,
And soft-stirred feet still answering to his sign:-
These are her gifts, as tongue may tell them o'er.
Breathe low her name, my soul; for that means more.*

[By] Dante Alighieri

*Her beauty has more force than rock,
And her blow cannot be cured by herbs.
So I have fled through plains and hills
To be able to escape from such a woman.
And neither hill nor wall nor green grass
Can ever shade me from her light.
Once I saw her dressed in green,
In such a form that she would have given to stone
The love that I bear for her very shadow.
And I have longed for her
In a beautiful meadow of grass,
Closed round by highest hills,
As deeply in love as any woman ever was.*

"Love's birth" by Dan Rowden

*Her voice, like the wind,
Lifts my spirit up, and tosses it,
As though dust, into the Heavens.
Her smile, like the sun,*

*Melts my glacial heart, and draws it,
As though dew, into the clouds.
Her touch, like the night,
Calms my fearful mind, and caresses it,
Like woven silk, into a dream.
Her love, like the Earth,
Binds my restless soul, and drags it,
Like a newborn child, into the world.*

"Amorous anticipation" by Jorge Luis Borges

*Not the intimacy of your forehead clear
as a celebration
nor the prize of your body, still mysterious and tacit
and childlike
nor the sequence of your life showing itself in words
or silence
will be so mysterious a favor
as to watch your dream implied
in the vigil of my arms.
Miraculously virgin again through the absolving virtue of sleep,
quiet and resplendent like a lucky choice of memories,
you will give me those far reaches of your life that you yourself
do not have.
Cast into stillness,
I will perceive that ultimate strand of your being
and will see you for the first time, perhaps
as God must see you,
the fiction of Time destroyed,
without love, without me.*

"A blade of grass" by Brian Patten

*You ask for a poem.
I offer you a blade of grass.
You say it is not good enough.
You ask for a poem.
You are indignant.
You say it is too easy to offer grass.
It is absurd.
Anyone can offer a blade of grass.
You ask for a poem.
And so I write you a tragedy about
How a blade of grass
Becomes more and more difficult to offer,
And about how as you grow older*

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

*A blade of grass
Becomes more difficult to accept.*

[From] "The innocence of any flesh sleeping"
by Brian Patten

*Sleeping beside you I dreamt I woke
beside you;
waking beside you I thought I was
dreaming.*

[From] "And sometimes it happens" by
Brian Patten

*And sometimes it happens that you are
loved and then
You are not loved,
And love is past.
And whole days are lost and among
them
A fountain empties itself into the grass.*

*And sometimes you want to speak to
her and then
You do not want to speak,
Then the opportunity has passed.
Your dreams flare up, they suddenly
vanish.*

*So you have nothing.
You wonder if these things matter and
then
As soon as you begin to wonder if these
things matter
They cease to matter,
And caring is past.
And a fountain empties itself into the
grass.*

"Brown penny" by William Butler Yeats

*I whispered, "I am too young."
And then, "I am old enough";
Wherefore I threw a penny
To find out if I might love.
"Go and love, go and love, young man,
If the lady be young and fair."
Ah, penny, brown penny, brown penny,
I am looped in the loops of her hair.*

*O love is the crooked thing,
There is nobody wise enough
To find out all that is in it,
For he would be thinking of love*

*Till the stars had run away
And the shadows eaten the moon.
Ah, penny, brown penny, brown penny,
One cannot begin it too soon.*

"Full woman, carnal apple ..." by Pablo
Neruda

*Full woman, carnal apple, hot moon,
dense aroma of crushed seaweed, mud
and light,
what obscure clarity opens between
your columns?
What ancient night does man touch
with his senses?*

*Oh, loving is a journey with water and
stars,
with stifled air and brusque tempests of
flour:
loving is a combat of lightning bolts
and two bodies defeated by a single
drop of honey.*

*Kiss by kiss I traverse your small infin-
ity,
your edges, your rivers, your tiny vil-
lages,
and the genital fire transformed into
delicacy*

*runs along the slender paths of blood
until plunging headlong like a carnation
of the night,
until it is and is no more than lightning
in the darkness.*

"Cobra woman" by Nigel Jackson

*With a fine brazen arrogance of hair
Lionsurfing the disdain of youth, you
drew
Me desertwards, mesmerised, to woo
The hooded violence of your cobra
stare.*

*Dangerous one, dwelling in ancient
dreams,
You raise the slumbering fire in my
spine
To try your adept tongue and deadly
wine,
And prove your mistressship of living
streams.*

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

"Become a dream" by Kevin Solway

*Get thee to a nunnery
Where our love can long endure
Where I will always be your God
And you always be mine
And like gods we'll play in Heaven
Till the end of time.*

[By] Otomo Yakamochi

*Once I did believe
myself to be a warrior
though I have found
Love has caused me to grow thin
since my love was not returned*

[By] Ronsard

*Dying of love,
I yet will not declare
The happy malady of which I die
Because I fear lest any come to cure
The sweetness of the anguish that I
sigh.*

[By] John Dryden

*Pains of love be sweeter far
Than all other pleasures are.*

"Seizure" by Sappho

*To me that man equals a god
as he sits before you and listens
closely to your sweet voice*

*and lovely laughter - which troubles
the heart in my ribs. For now
as I look at you my voice fails,*

*my tongue is broken and thin fire
runs like a thief through my body.
My eyes are dead to light, my ears*

*pound, and sweat pours down over me.
I shudder, I am paler than grass,
and am intimate with dying - but*

I must suffer everything, being poor.

"Bernice" by George Moore

*I know not how it was, her kisses stung
Her bird-like throat full-filled with flut-
tering voice,*

*Leaned over me, and all her sultry hair
Fell round my face. The perfume of
roses*

*Drove me mad. I know not how it was,
In kissing her, I held her face beneath
The pallid water-flowers, until it grew
more wan than they. The roses were
asleep,*

*The moon saw not between the darkling
trees,*

Only the lilies saw her drowned face.

*And now through all the odorous sum-
mer night*

*I harken to the fountain's warbling
song,*

*Murmuring softly, O softly, to the lilies
The secret of Bernice, my only love.*

"Chantecler" by Charles Brasch

*Where I love I hate
And cannot
Love where I hate*

*But, blind in the net
Turn and burn and
Curse the foiled heart.*

"The Hill" by Rupert Brook

*Breathless, we flung us on the windy
hill,*

*Laughed in the sun, and kissed the
lovely grass.*

*You said, "Through glory and ecstasy
we pass;*

*Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds
sing still,*

*When we are old, are old ..." "And
when we die*

*All's over that is ours; and life burns on
Through other lovers, other lips," said*

I,

*"Heart of my heart, our heaven is now,
is won!"*

*"We are Earth's best, that learnt her
lesson here.*

*Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!"
we said;*

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

*"We shall go down with reluctant
tread
Rose-crowned into the darkness! ... "
Proud we were,
And laughed, that had such brave true
things to say.
And then you suddenly cried, and
turned away.*

[By] Emmett Williams

*She loves me
She loves me not
She loves
She loves me
She She loves She*

[By] Guillaume IX

*Never has man been able to understand
What love is,
In wish or in desire,
In thought or in imagination;
Such joy has no equal,
And whoever would praise it properly
Would not be able to accomplish this
task,
If he tried for a year.*

*Through her joy she can heal the sick,
And through her anger she can kill the
healthy,
And of the wise man make a fool,
And cause the handsome one to lose his
beauty,
And brutalize the most courteous
And give courtesy to every brute.*

"What then?" by Dan Rowden

*If I said I love you, What then?
Would the rainbow's gentle arch
Fall silently upon the ashen sea?
Would the swallow's playful dance
Forever be as still as earth-felt snow?
Would summers die, If I said I love
you?*

*Would the Heavens quake and thunder
And Lucifer himself bemoan his birth,
Tearing at his heart in wild perdition?
Would the trembling of your heart
Bring muteness to the softness of your
lips,*

*And time itself be forever stilled?
Would statues weep, If I said I love
you?*

"Paradox" by Dan Rowden

*Her hate is like a knife
Hovering silently over my heart,
And only if it plunges tearfully down-
ward
Can I possibly know her love.*

"Regrets" by Dan Rowden

*She should have married the postman, I
think;
She gives him more smiles than me.
There's a middle-aged grocer she
knows pretty well;
She often invites him for tea.
But they do not love her,
Nor care for her heart;
They merely submit to her guiles.
If only they knew that her heart isn't
true,
They'd never acknowledge her smiles.
Yes, she should have married the post-
man, I think;
I really don't care for him much.*

[From] Like Our Bodies Imprint by Yehuda
Amichai

*Like our bodies imprint
Not a sign will remain that we are in
this place
The world closes behind us,
the sand straightens itself*

*Dates are already in view
In which you no longer exist,
Already a wind blows clouds
Which will not rain on us both*

*The three languages I know,
All the colours in which I see and
dream*

NONE WILL HELP ME.

[From] "I wonder, love ..." by Pedro Salinas

*I wonder, love, are you
a long farewell that never ends?*

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

*From the first, living is separating.
In the first encounter
with light, with lips,
the heart perceives the anguish
of having to be blind and alone some
day.*

*Love is the miraculous delay
of its own termination.*

"Love" by George Granville

Love is begot by fancy, bred

*By ignorance, by expectation fed,
Destroyed by knowledge, and, at best,
Lost in the moment 'tis possessed.*

"Summary" by Dorothy Parker

*Every love's the love before
In a duller dress.
That's the measure of my lore -
Here's my bitterness:
Would I knew a little more,
Or very much less!*

4 October 1992

From: David Quinn
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Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

You say, Kevin, that you are stretched to describe what has happened. I am equally stretched to understand your description. I mean, I really do not know what to make of your letter. This is because there seems to be all sorts of inconsistencies contained within it. Sometimes I hear the voice of the philosopher, sometimes the narrator, sometimes the child. But I'm even not certain as to whether these inconsistencies actually exist in your letter, or arise purely from the limits of my own understanding.

It seems that your description of the world of the lying gods is the description of the worldly belief that "everyone is imperfect, and always will be imperfect". In other words, the choosing of fantasy is the rejection of truth or spiritual ideality as a mode of life. As you say, this is something you have known and thought about for years. How are you now different? Has truth disappeared from the horizon?

You see, I have no idea what you mean by "change". On the face of it, it seems that you are fully in control of the situation, that these heavenly experiences of yours are like a little temporary eddy in the steady stream to truth. "Change" can refer to a complete departure from philosophical living, that is, forming a stagnant pool; or it could be anything in between; or "change" could refer to no departure whatsoever, that this phase of your life is a necessary step in the right direction. Are you in the position to be able to categorize it in this manner?

Sue tells me one or two things about what you're up to of late. For example she gives me some descriptions of your romantic pursuits. I, like a gossip hound, lap it all up - it always interests me to hear of your activities whatever they may be. However, her descriptions are, at bottom, as vague

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

and nebulous as your own letter. I suppose only a three-hundred page volume of small print, outlining all the happenings in meticulous detail would satisfy me. Consequently, I really cannot understand the intent of your letter.

The line describing how it has become agonizingly clear how much egotism was involved in your quest for integrity now that you try to live without it – this is an example of that which perplexes me. Is this meant to be irony? Or what? This is the thing: your letter is a mix of narration and irony, and it is difficult to separate which is which. I guess it is the case that my lofty and discerning mind is unable to deal with these issues.

You know, Kevin, I really can't imagine you living a godly life. I can't conjure up the appropriate images of your worshipping a woman, or being the hippie. It must be torture for you, if these are the sorts of activities you are pursuing. How can you bear it? You mentioned on the phone that it is difficult to motivate yourself to truth when everyone else in the world has no interest in it. Should this be an appropriate motivation? Is this the egotism you talk about which empowered your past quests for integrity? I mean, if one is motivated by the effects of one's actions, how can we stop from entering the godly realms of lies. The ego cares little for the nature of the effects, just as long as it can produce effects.

You are always living and mixing with people - how much of your quest for integrity is empowered by them, rather than by truth alone. Kierkegaard makes a criticism of Socrates, in that Socrates spent all his days talking with others; he wondered how Socrates would have coped without those stimulants.

Sue might be right when she says that you may have overestimated my powers in the past, though I am not sure that this can be judged properly as yet. It is an open-ended question, in as much as my life is still an open-ended question.

Similarly, I cannot judge yet whether your manner of teaching has produced hindrances to my spiritual development or not. However, I will make the following points:

- It must be remembered that for the first twenty years of life, I was a mindless entity, completely devoid of purpose and thought. This is actually a blessing of sorts, since if one is to have a mindless upbringing then it is better to be completely mindless. In that way, attachment to intellectual and philosophical achievements are slight.

- That I met you at the right stage of life, just when I was beginning to awake from my slumber, and had developed a modicum of disgust for society.

- That I felt the truth of your words in a powerful manner, and was immediately seized by the importance of it all. In short, I was transformed

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

from a mindless, drugged-out drop-out into a passionate lover of reason and truth - all in the matter of weeks.

- That this set up a clash with my past, persuading me to spend the next few years, from then till now, trying to come to grips with it all.

- That during those years when I had associated with your company I was certainly not qualified to preach to anybody, and so was not happy with your pressuring me into a crusading mode. I attempted it for a while, but knew deep down that it was nothing but a farce. This is a doubt I have in you and your manner of teaching. No doubt, crusading is a noble and necessary activity for you; you have planted deep roots - crusading thus showers benefits to the world and yourself. Back then I possessed mere tentative buds. Your manner both explicitly and implicitly pressured me to be militant before I was ready to do so. I would much rather you ensured that your disciples were qualified before crusading. I do not know what you make of these thoughts, but am open to the possibility that they are in error. What do you think?

Actually, I can't agree with Sue about you being a hindrance to me on account of your being a guru or father-figure. Surely, if these were the problem, the fault would lay with me. I mean, it is the demons of my past which hinder more than anything else. If I had had a more favourable upbringing, then I would've simply taken from you what I needed, and then moved on. It is because of my past mindless existence, that I came to rely on your authority. And this was a piece of good fortune, not a hindrance. For if I had had developed attachments to intellectual or philosophical attainments before meeting you, then I would have resisted your words. But as it was, I absorbed the whole thing in toto. Thus I came to judge all things via your teachings and precepts, of which I grasped their essential truth from the beginning. In this way my whole life completely changed.

Now, this type of behaviour - that of judging things through your eyes - is fine and necessary, for a while, until it becomes assimilated into my thinking. But there is the very real danger of stagnation inherent: one can appear to develop one's mind merely by imitation - knowledge is gained by comparing new information with Kevin's assumptions and precepts; actions are performed in conformity with Kevin's values. In other words, it is easy to cease the important bit: the understanding of Truth for oneself. This danger is greatly increased when the imitator is pressured into "speaking the pure truth" to others. The imitator gets embroiled in the game of how to give slicky answers to others, of how to defend Kevin's views to others. In other words, the imitator loses himself in preserving the ego, rather than increasing his spirit.

This is why I am totally against imitation. By imitation, I mean copying another's actions or lifestyle in an ignorant manner, even if this other happens to be a Buddha. No, it is best that one endeavours to think out for

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

oneself how to act in this world, to think out how to pursue truth in one's own particular manner, to explore the various lifestyles and examples of past spiritual men so that one can create a new way of living and speaking truthfully, created out of one's own understanding.

This, of course, is why I am living a couple of thousand miles away from you. Before returning to Brisbane and rejoining your company, my ego needs to be capable of standing on its own two feet, with a sufficient grasp of Truth. Only in this way will you then benefit me.

Your personality is powerful, and it is this which can produce the hindrances to your disciples. If they are simply carried along on the strength of your personality, what good does it do them? It simply blinds them to their own strengths and weaknesses, and this hinders them from developing. And it is here that feelings of loneliness in a teacher can do all sorts of harm.

One looks at history and sees that the disciple is almost invariably a far inferior creature to his master. This is either because (a) the master is simply an extraordinary creature and no amount of teaching can turn a disciple into an extraordinary creature, or (b) the disciple is prevented from reaching the extraordinary on account of his attachment to his master or (c) both. How on earth can I bear being inferior? What a miserable wretch I would be if I could not attain the master's heights! How can I possibly live kissing the feet of another man? It's just not possible. I'm too jealous. So you see, if I am to be an extraordinary creature, then I must bow to no authority other than my own reasoning mind. This, admittedly, is a still yet-to-be actuality, in that my acquaintance with the enlightened state is not overly familiar.

Is an authority, however genuine, really a good? Except in the initial stages, it is difficult to believe so.

Re: Woman Essays. I'm going to hang on to them for a while, I think. They irk me. My ambivalence towards them approaches the extreme. Preferably, I want to produce something that I can happily defend in future years, and these essays won't fulfil this criteria. At least sometimes they seem not to; at other times, I think they work well. As I say, I am ambivalent.

Re: U.G Krishnamurti. I had a look for his work in Hobart, but they tell me his book is out of print, and that they have never heard of photocopies of it etc. Tell me, what do these photocopies cost? If his work is of quality, I would be keen to obtain it. Is it feasible for you to organize a copy to be sent down?⁴⁸

Hear from you soon.

David

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

THE NATURE OF REALITY

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series* -

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2nd July, 1995

Guests:

- Dr. Tuan Nuyen - Associate Professor in Philosophy at the University of Queensland
- Dr. William Grey - Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Queensland

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

David: "I should warn you that the views expressed in this program do not necessarily represent the board of directors of 4RPH or its staff and management. Hello everyone. I'm David Quinn, with me is Kevin Solway, and together we present *The Hour of Judgment*. Starting tonight, and over the weeks and months ahead in this time slot, we'll be bringing to you what we believe is a world first in radio history - and that is a program made solely for thinkers. Make no mistake, this is a thinking man's radio program. We aim to get to the bottom of everything. We'll be examining philosophy, religion, science, psychology, feminism, and all the other aspects of human thought, in a bid to uncover what is actually true in life and what is false. To help us in this important work, we'll be inviting people onto the program each week, people who themselves are serious and passionate about life, or who claim some sort of expertise in a particular area. And with them, Kevin and I will discuss and debate and argue and do all we can to get to the very nitty-gritty of the subject matter at hand. Now tonight's discussion will most likely centre around philosophy. Our two guests are in fact professional philosophers from the University of Queensland. They are Dr Tuan Nuyen, Associate Professor, and Dr William Grey, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy. Welcome, the both of you."

William: "Thank you very much."

Tuan: "Thank you."

David: "Welcome also to Kevin Solway who will be our resident expert each week."

Kevin: "Good evening."

David: "Right, let's get on with it. I'd like to come to grips with what philosophy actually is, and whether it can provide us with answers. Now, Tuan and William, you both represent a particular tradition of philosophy. It has its own style of doing things. I'm sure most of our listeners have some sort of acquaintance with Western philosophy in the sense that it's a very abstract, complex, obtuse, dry and technical subject - it's something that boffins do in the bowels of universities, so it seems. They'd also know that philosophy, or academic philosophy, has been around for a long time. It has its roots back in the ancient Greeks, doesn't it - two and a half thousand years ago. I wonder if, William, you could start off with stating what is the purpose of academic philosophy?"

William: "Well, the purpose of academic philosophy, I think, is the same as the purpose of inquiry quite generally. If you look at it in its broadest perspective I see the purpose of inquiry is trying to locate us intelligibly and satisfyingly somewhere in the complex web of contingencies that constitute history. So I think that art and poetry and philosophical inquiry are all ways of reflecting on the human predicament and trying to make sense of it. But of course philosophy, I think, has its own particular perspective on this. I think using the methods of abstract thought is the tradition, as you said, which started about five or six hundred BC in ancient Greece, and has really generated a lot of different branches and different styles over the millennia. And I guess we'll explore a bit more about how some of these branches have developed."

David: "When I think of the word 'philosophy' ... well, ever since I can remember,

* "In 1995 David Quinn and I began broadcasting 'The Hour of Judgment' on Brisbane radio. Our aim was to meet various experts in dialogue about Ultimate issues." - Kevin Solway

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

philosophy has meant to me the understanding of reality."

William: "Literally, it means 'love of wisdom' and so it's just a name for enquiry at a quite general level. I think that there are two ways in which we relate to the world - that is, trying to do something, which is technology, and thinking about it, which is the activity of reflective thought. You can see philosophy as the original form of enquiry which successively produced other branches of enquiry. Whenever a technique is developed for pursuing a particular question, it branches off. Mathematics developed its own autonomy very early on, but you can see successively over the centuries that subjects like physics, chemistry, etc - all of these were once called Natural Philosophy. But they all have branched off because they have developed their own methods and their own disciplinary integrity. But you can see, I think, philosophy as being the sort of source of general interest which, as Plato said, begins in wonder or puzzlement about the world, in wanting to make sense of it."

Kevin: "Okay, I'd like to narrow it down a little bit more. Philosophy is a very broad term - even children in the playground need some kind of philosophy, some kind of relation to the world whereby they can interact with their fellow classmates and live harmoniously in the world to some degree. But what I'm interested in is this higher form of philosophy which is more than just a wisdom of living in the world like everybody has to do, but an ultimate wisdom, an absolute wisdom. I'd call this real philosophy rather than ordinary human life. I was brought up to think that philosophers were a class above ordinary people. So I'd like to concentrate more on this aspect - this aspect of Absolute Wisdom. What does academic philosophy have to say on this subject? Is there any part of academic philosophy that deals with Absolute Wisdom?"

Tuan: "Well, I suppose one way of answering that question is to suggest that Absolute Wisdom is knowledge about the Absolute. One way of getting a handle on this question is to ask it a little bit differently so that we could begin to answer it properly. One suggestion is, as I said, is to understand your question of Ultimate Wisdom as knowledge of the Absolute, whatever that

may be, and one of the things it could be is what David said when he talked about 'ultimate reality'. And so if we could find out something about this so-called 'ultimate reality', then this would be part of the Ultimate Wisdom that you've been talking about."

Kevin: "Yes. So looking at the current state of philosophy after two and a half thousand years, is there any major concern today with the possible existence of an ultimate reality? What are your ideas on this? Is your department at the university concerned with discovering an ultimate reality?"

Tuan: "Well, that would be part of metaphysics. Metaphysics has always been a concern in philosophy generally, and certainly we do talk a bit about metaphysics. In fact, there is a professional journal called *The Review of Metaphysics*. I suspect, though, that you may be disappointed in the various discussions that are published in *The Review of Metaphysics*, because the question of ultimate reality is not discussed perhaps in the way that non-professional philosophers expect it to be discussed. I guess what people have in mind, generally, is whether there is something that is beyond or above - something that is eternal and immutable and so on and so forth."

Kevin: "Yes."

Tuan: "But the Greeks did ask that question. The Greeks, or at least Plato, thought that real knowledge is knowledge of something that is eternal, immutable, and unchangeable."

Kevin: "Okay, what about the two of you personally? Presumably, you must have thought about this subject considerably. Can I ask you personally, William, do you believe it is possible to have an ultimate knowledge, or a knowledge of ultimate reality?"

William: "I think, no. I think that knowledge is always provisional, incremental, evolutionary, changing. I think that we find ourselves on a very curious and fascinating planet, and we devise technological and conceptual tools for making sense of it, and adapting to it, and I think it's a continuing process of modification."

Kevin: "So you say that you *think* this is the case?"

William: "Yes."

Kevin: "Do you state this with certainty?"

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

William: "Absolutely not. No."

Kevin: "'Absolutely not'. This is an interesting question. There are a lot of people around today who are absolutely sure that they're not sure of anything. Yet this is a form of absolute. Through some sort of logical process they've arrived at an opinion on something. For example, if we take empirical knowledge, empirical science, which is concerned with the senses - and obviously we can't be sure of anything that we perceive through our senses because our senses can be mistaken, and they always are to some extent - this kind of knowledge is obviously uncertain. But there is another kind of knowledge - logical knowledge, based on definitions - which is an absolute knowledge."

William: "Well, even the firm truths of logic are called into question by some thinkers."

Kevin: "Well, let's take an example. If we define something to be a 'cup', and everything other than this thing to be 'not a cup', then we can state with *absolute certainty* that the cup, and whatever it is that is not the cup, are different things. This is because we define them to be different. So here we have an absolute statement of certainty which is beyond question."

William: "Well, I think there are various, to my mind, heroic thinkers who are prepared to entertain, for example, the existence of real contradictions and they would perhaps say that there is no statement at all that can be relied on as being absolutely certain. Anyway, let's go along with you and assume that at least logic is certain."

Kevin: "I'd like to arrive at some certainty."

William: "Okay."

Kevin: "If we define a bicycle as having two wheels, well then, a bicycle has two wheels - unless we change our definition. So there is no way that a sane person - I'm thinking about a person who has some kind of logical processes - could then say that a bicycle has three wheels, if in their own mind they know that a bicycle has two wheels. You see, they'd have to be completely insane. I'd say that even an insane person couldn't make the statement. So this is the kind of certainty I'm looking at, a sort of logical certainty upon which Absolute Truth must certainly be based. Because this is the only absolute there

can be. Is there work being done in academic philosophy in this area?"

Tuan: "Can I just get back to the question of definition. In philosophy we make a distinction between two kinds of statements. One we call analytic and the other we call synthetic. An analytic statement is - well, an example of it is the sort of thing you just mentioned in terms of the bicycle, something with two wheels. Another hackneyed kind of example is, 'a bachelor is an unmarried man'. Now, an analytical statement like that is always true and it is a contradiction to think of it as false. But then there are other statements which are not like that - we call them synthetic statements. If I say, for example, that the door of this studio is shut, then that just happens to be true but it is not *absolutely* true. I mean, it could well be an hallucination. It could well be wide open."

Kevin: "That's what I call empirical knowledge."

Tuan: "That's right. Now I guess the question you're asking is, 'Could there be a statement about ultimate reality which is true in the way that an analytic statement is true?'"

Kevin: "Yes."

Tuan: "Ah, my answer to that is no, because it is knowledge *about something* and this is always synthetic - unless, of course, you want to make it such that it is true by definition, in which case you're just cheating yourself. So with that in mind, I guess I'm supporting William here in saying that as long as it is some kind of synthetic statement you can never be absolutely certain about it."

Kevin: "Well, I'd like to examine this question about cheating ourselves when we assert a truth which is based on a definition. Do you want to continue on this, David, or should I?"

David: "No, you go on."

Kevin: "Okay. If these truths by definitions are the only real truths that we can have, and the only truths that we can be certain of, then surely they are important to us. At least, they are important to me as a man who wants permanence and Truth above all things. Now, I'm going to branch off into metaphysics now - which is real philosophy, I suppose I'd call it - in an attempt to come to some kind of grasp of Ultimate Reality. Now I'll make a statement that "all things which appear to be finite are in fact infinite", and the proof of this is based on definitions. I don't know

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

whether I should go through the step by step reasoning ... but because things, finite things, are dependant on other things, then things are not separate to each other. You'd probably recognize this as a Buddhist kind of philosophy. The finiteness of things, or the existence of things, is illusory. Things are real enough in the sense that our senses definitely produce them and so they have a practical benefit to our species, but nevertheless, logically, they can be proven to be illusory. This is approaching absolute knowledge. This is what I think philosophy should be concerned with. And mind you, this is not just pure intellectual reasoning here because imagine what a person's life is like when they think like this! - when a person can live in the world knowing that everything they see is illusory. It definitely changes the way they live. Have you ever heard of these ideas before?"

Tuan: "Well, I have. But if you want to talk about Buddhism, then the problem is that Buddhism doesn't subscribe to the idea of Ultimate Reality. It is true that in Buddhism it is believed that all the things we experience, see, hear and touch, are illusory, as you say, but it doesn't say that there is something behind all of that."

Kevin: "True. I'm not saying that either. I think what I'm saying is that when we are no longer deluded, when we no longer believe things to be true that aren't true, then I'm defining that as seeing Reality - even though Reality is not a thing."

Tuan: "Hmm, hmm."

Kevin: "I'm defining Reality as the absence of false perceptions. So when false perceptions are halted, then Reality - that is, what I define to be Reality - is not an actual thing."

William: "How can there be any perceptions that are not false if all is illusion? I see that as one puzzle, and another thing I'm unhappy about is the step in the argument from 'everything being dependent on something else' to the conclusion that therefore 'everything is infinite' - it seems to me that that is a dubious inference."

Kevin: "Okay, let's concentrate on that subject, the last one you mentioned there. If things are dependent on each other, can they still be independent? Well, I suppose it all comes down to definitions again, doesn't it? Take myself. Can I exist separately to other people at the same time as being dependent

upon them? I would argue that this is impossible, because these dependencies are relations, and these relations are things which link one thing to another thing. These links are connections, and we have connections going out from our bodies and minds into the environment, and these connections are not numbered - these connections are infinite. Around us, every part of our body and every part of our mind is connected to the environment around us. It's like an umbilical cord which is completely surrounding our entire body and mind. When you look at the world like this, it's impossible to see things as being really separate to each other - even though things appear to be separate to our gross senses. Is this making a bit more sense?"

Tuan: "Well, let's try to understand this question a little bit better. You talk about dependency and relatedness and so on and make the claim that things are related to each other and so on and so forth. They're not separate as they appear to be. What kind of relatedness or dependency are we talking about here? There are a few possibilities that I can think of. I can think of causal dependency, for example, or causal relatedness—"

Kevin: "Let's leave it at that - causal relatedness."

Tuan: "Causal relatedness means that certain things that I do or say will have causal effects on other people. Somebody who may be listening to this program may be moved by what I'm saying, or may be angered by what I'm saying, or maybe encouraged to enrol in philosophy - that sort of thing."

Kevin: "Yes."

Tuan: "And so this is one kind of relatedness or dependency."

Kevin: "I'm thinking perhaps of an even more fundamental causal relationship - causation of a thing's existence. I'm saying that if a thing exists - simply on that level - if a thing exists, then it must be *caused* to exist. This is by definition because existence is a human concept. Without a consciousness to conceive of existence, we can't rightly say there is existence."

William: "Do you think the world existed before there were any conscious beings?"

Kevin: "Yes, it did - only because we can conceive of it. Because we can conceive of a world existing before conscious beings, therefore it exists. This is by definition."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

William: "It came to have existed after conscious minds existed?"

Kevin: "However, we'd like to put it. Whatever seems practical to our minds is true."

William: "Well, this is sort of a statement of a pragmatic theory of truth, yes. A rather loose one."

Kevin: "So do you honestly think that something can exist without there being any concept of existence?"

William: "Yes, I do. I think the question of existence, reality, truth and the question of knowledge, understanding, awareness are quite separate questions. And I guess this is a very old dispute in philosophy, which goes right back to its origins, about what extent can we make sense of a world existing independently of minds which might be aware of the world."

Kevin: "Well, I'd still go back to what I said before about how we can't really say a thing exists if the concept of existence has never arisen in the universe. For example, let's say one second after the Big Bang, there was ... well, I suppose we can say that there was "something". Looking at it from our point of view now, at this moment, we can look back and say whether something was there. But at the time, when there was no conscious life, presumably, and it's just bits of atoms spraying in space ... try and cast your mind back and dissipate your mind until it no longer exists. This is getting very meta-physical now. So when the mind no longer exists, there can be no concept of "self" and there can be no concept of "other", therefore there can be no concept of "existence". I'm not really saying that nothing exists, because for me to say that nothing exists implies there must be something that exists. Non-existence depends on existence. Everything depends on something else. So I would say that, ultimately - before there was consciousness, as well as right now - we can never correctly say that things either exist or not exist. What is consciousness? I'm going to completely break the line of argument here. Well, not completely. Is academic philosophy concerned with what is consciousness?"

William: "I think the mind/body problem is a very open question and people have been puzzling about this for two and a half millennia or more. We've got a reasonably good, if

rudimentary, understanding of physical reality - the way forces govern structures, and the way physical objects behave, and the way that they can be controlled. But how you can make sense of conscious experience and mind, I think, is a deeply baffling mystery."

David: "Well, I think that all these problems revolve around the idea of whether things exist or not. Everything comes down to that. Consciousness, for example, is some sort of entity: it is something that we can conceive of, as is anything else like clouds or atoms; it has some sort of existence; it has an identity of some kind. And so the question of whether, say, the mind is separate from the body is really a question of whether the mind can have real existence - whether it can be truly separate from anything else. This is what Kevin was saying before. So I think we should really concentrate on this question."

Kevin: "You've talked me into it."

David: "It is the most important question of all - the question of how things really exist, whether they can exist separately from other things and so forth - because everything rests on this."

Tuan: "Well, I suppose we're getting back to the question of dependency and relatedness and so on and so forth. There is a fairly respectable view according to which everything that exists is caused to exist. Things didn't come into existence on their own and in fact the only object that came into existence on its own, without being caused by anything else, was God."

David: "Is this your personal view?"

Tuan: "No, no, this is not my personal view. I am just saying that the view that everything that exists is caused to exist is a fairly respectable and standard view, and in fact that is one premise of the, well, fairly respectable argument for the existence of God, who is the Uncaused Cause, if you like. And so, if you leave God out of the picture, then everything else exists because it's been caused to exist by something else. My existence was caused by my parents and so on and so forth, and you can say that about everything. This cup here was made by someone or it was manufactured and so on and so forth. You can say that about everything that exists in the world. Now—"

David: "I'd actually argue that this is an argument against the concept of God, because

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

if everything has a cause then there is no beginning to anything at all. There is no room at all for God because everything is beginningless and endless. But let's assume that cause and effect, as you describe it, is so - the next logical step to that is seeing that you can't find any boundary between where one thing begins and another ends, because everything gets lost in its causes. A cup is caused by human labour, the earth, clay and all that sort of stuff. You can't find the precise point where this cup came into existence. Because at bottom there's *nothing* there. We ourselves project the boundaries onto the world around us - they're arbitrarily put down. So, again, if we are going to accept this point of view, then it comes down to whether cause and effect is actually true. If cause and effect is true, then the beginningless and endlessness of everything is also true."

William: "Well, the boundaries may be a bit vague, but a vague boundary can be a perfectly workable one."

David: "Yes, but the boundaries still can't exist outside a conscious mind. Boundaries are created by conscious minds in order to deal with day to day life. But when you change your perspective, the boundaries change. You get a different view of reality. In other words, these boundaries have no real existence."

William: "Well, I'm of the view that there are boundaries that exist in the world - natural divisions in the way reality is structured that are quite independent of the way we think about it."

David: "Can you give us an example?"

William: "Oh, for example, there are ninety-six elements that naturally occur - the chemical elements. Now it seems to me this is not an invention of human enquiry. It's a discovery. These separate elements with their own particular characteristics existed long before there was any consciousness in the universe to discover this fact."

David: "Well, I would say that Nature lends itself to be divided up in particular ways. It's more practical for us to divide the elements into the ninety-six different elements there are. But when you analyse their existence, they disappear. I mean, these elements are made up of atoms and these atoms share a common bond, if you like. You can

see that these boundaries begin to dissolve when you analyse them. These elements may exist on a crude level - as all things exist on a crude level - but when you analyse and look for where they begin or end they disappear."

Kevin: "All the elements are based on hydrogen, basically. All the elements are just different levels of evolution of the hydrogen atom."

William: "The proton seems to be the fundamental building block."

Kevin: "Yes."

William: "Protons and neutrons, sure."

Kevin: "So where is this existence? Let's take human life, for example. Now a lot of people say that life begins at conception. I was actually never brought up by my parents to think this; I was bought up to think that life begins at birth. So when I began hearing people say that life began at conception, I thought, "Oh well, all of a sudden I've grown nine months older!" I've heard someone say recently that life begins when a mother accepts the child, so this "life" depends on what other people think of your life - this is taking dependency to extremes here. When we analyse where our life begins we can't find it, and the reason we can't find it is not because it's difficult to find but because it's logically impossible for there actually to be a beginning to our life."

William: "Well, yes, I think I'm going to concede that there is no such thing as the point at which life begins. If you're dealing with the process of development of the organism that starts off with conception and then goes through the slow process of embryological development, then there is a succession of phases. It does seem to be arbitrary to say that any point is the critical moment."

Kevin: "Yes. So really, in other words, our lives have no beginning."

William: "Well, that doesn't follow. I mean, it seems to me you've made a giant leap."

Kevin: "Can you explain to me how we could possibly have a beginning? Could you make one up?"

William: "Well, it certainly seems to me that, say, in 1900 I did not exist in any sense. William Grey was altogether absent from the scheme of things back then."

Kevin: "Oh, I think you will find that you were still around then."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

William: "No ... well, perhaps the constituent components that ultimately came to constitute William Grey were around in the world, somewhere or other."

Kevin: "But, actually, the William Grey that exists now in this moment didn't exist five minutes ago. You're continually changing. Every part of your body and mind are changing. So you are a completely different William Grey to the one five minutes ago, even though we call you by the same name. We're probably doing you a disservice by continually calling you William Grey. We should probably call people by a different name every single time we see them in order to honour their ability to change. So you are a different person every single moment, and even before your birth you were also continually changing. Of course, we all like to think that we have a consciousness, or a self, which is somehow permanent. Through using our memory, we can remember when we were young, we can remember five minutes ago and we are conscious of ourselves now - so we tend to think we have something permanent in there. Do you think ...?"

William: "Absolutely, yes! I think you just contradicted yourself by saying, on the one hand, that there is no such thing as the William Grey that existed five minutes ago, but now you're conceding that there is some memory, some important continuity, that remains throughout all the changes."

Kevin: "It *appears* to us. Something appears to remain the same throughout the changes."

William: "Absolutely."

Kevin: "So what do you think? Is there really something permanent?"

Tuan: "I must confess ... I've lost the plot here. I'm not sure of what question we're dealing with."

Kevin: "Well, I think it is all related to existence. In particular, the existence of a human life is what I'm trying to strike at here. The existence of a human person. What is the person? What is the self? Is the existence of such a thing possible? If it is possible then there must be a beginning to our life and our consciousness. Now if everything has causes and those causes go back infinitely, by necessity, and the causes of our consciousness goes back infinitely, can we really exist? Do we really have a consciousness? What is this

consciousness? Do you want to say something, David?"

David: "Well, yes, I think we should have a break here. Paul, do we have any music lined up?"

Kevin: "Well, perhaps we could play, seeing this is the first program, the theme music which we started with. That should give us two minutes to think of what we are going to say next."

[MUSIC BREAK]

David: "What was that Kevin? C.P.E. Bach or something, wasn't it?"

Kevin: "I don't know, but it was good though, wasn't it?"

David: "Yes. So what were we talking about? We were talking about this idea of whether things can come into existence, of whether there is a boundary."

William: "Beginning and ceasing to exist."

David: "So what are your thoughts on this, Tuan? Have you thought about it?"

Tuan: "Well, in my own case, I have a pretty rough idea of when I came into existence. I guess the biological answer to this is perfectly acceptable to me, in that the entity continuously develops. This entity came into existence when the two sets of chromosomes joined together at the moment of conception, and also, biologically, I can anticipate the moment when the disintegration of the unit, of the entity I now call "myself", occurs. But we are talking in terms of biology now. You mentioned before the idea of a person ... when a person came into existence - when this person ceases to exist is a slightly different question - has to do with how you define a person. You might want to define a person as somebody with consciousness - I know this is a question we haven't resolved, but let's assume that we know what it is - then that person begins to exist when consciousness comes into existence and ceases to exist when consciousness goes out of existence. So even if this biological unit continues to live on in a state of permanent coma, you might want to say that the person no longer exists."

Kevin: "Let's keep it on a simpler level. Ignore the person for the moment and the level of consciousness. When the chromosomes come together we have a complete genetic complement, as the biologists call it. This is like a blueprint for a house. The instructions are there to build a human being.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

But we don't call a blueprint for a house 'the house', it's just a blueprint. It's just a piece of paper - little more than toilet paper. So really, when the chromosomes come together there's nothing important there. If the chromosomes come together and we put them on a petri-dish then nothing much is going to happen - this magical life won't spring into existence. So I'm trying to extend this idea - and I'm choosing this particular subject of human life because people have such an emotional attachment to it - and come to the conclusion that life literally has no beginning. This can then be extended to all things in Nature - human life is no different to anything else in Nature. Consciousness is just a 'thing', no different to any other 'thing' in the universe."

David: "This is in relation to this particular point of *existence*."

Kevin: "Exactly. Obviously, consciousness is different in that it has different characteristics and attributes, but fundamentally it's just a 'thing' - a thing we can conceive of."

Tuan: "Well, it seems to be two different things that we're talking about here and I think it would be useful for us to separate them. Are we talking about life in general, whatever that means, or are we talking about an individuated life - for example, my life or William's life?"

Kevin: "Let's talk about life as a *thing*. So without asking questions about what life is, let's just assume that there's something ... there's something called life. And we were trying to uncover whether it is possible for this thing to really exist - in other words, to have a beginning. If it has a beginning, I will grant that it exists. If we can't find a beginning to it, or if it is not possible for there to be a beginning, then we can extend that to say that it is not possible for anything to really exist. Remember, we are talking about life as just being a "thing" - we don't need to concern ourselves with anything more detailed than that."

William: "Generally speaking, I think biologists have got a fairly clear understanding of when organisms begin and cease to exist. When single-celled organisms divide, that seems to be a point of discontinuity which marks the life of these individuals. For the multi-cellular varieties like ourselves, conception and disintegration at death seem to mark a fairly natural end points, even though

you cannot state exactly when the critical moment or the absolute precise threshold occurs. I don't think this matters."

Kevin: "I think my point is, though, that it is not possible for there to be any critical moment."

William: "That's fine."

Kevin: "Because everything is part of a process, as you said earlier. There is no critical moment. Every moment is absolutely dependant on everything around it - absolutely dependant on the environment, absolutely dependant on what has happened previously."

William: "I think it was Dr Johnson who said that the fact of dusk doesn't prove that I can't know day from night, and these fuzzy boundaries don't mean that you can't distinguish existence and non-existence."

Kevin: "Okay, David and I both live in this world and we both definitely believe we exist."

William: "Good."

Kevin: "In fact, we agree that we exist so much that we even decided to do our own radio program. But, at the same time, I think David and I are aware that this existence is only an appearance. And being a rational being, and not being able to avoid it, I accept the appearance that is being forced upon me - through what I have inherited. But my reason tells me that at no point in my past did I actually come into existence. It might be practical sometimes to say, "Oh yes, I began at conception", or it might be practical sometimes to say I began at childbirth - which is what my parents chose to tell me when I was a child. It might be practical to be like that person I was telling you about who said that life begins when the mother accepts the child. It might be practical to say that life begins at age twelve, when a child has more analytical thought- processes and is able to think about the past and future, and generally becomes a more conscious being with responsibility. So all these things have their practical uses. But I think the point is that that's all they have - they're just practical, depending on what we value in life. For example, if we don't value intelligence, if we don't value conscious responsible behaviour, then we might not care when children arrive at the point of being responsible and intelligent. So this age of eleven or twelve, when the mind has evolved to this certain level, we may not care

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

about this - we might not even have a word for it; it doesn't exist as far as we're concerned. We create these existences. We create these boundaries - depending partly on what our senses throw up in front of us, and partly on what we value. Personally, I value Truth and Wisdom - Wisdom about the Ultimate Reality. So all of the boundaries, or as many as I can manage, that I perceive are based on these values. I judge people according to what benefit they are to Wisdom. If a person has no benefit to the survival of Wisdom in this world, then this person has very little value to me - maybe none. I can see no reason for their existence."

William: "Well, presumably they might have very good reasons for their existence from their own perspective and point of view."

Kevin: "I'm glad you pointed that out!"

William: "Yes."

Kevin: "Okay, but let's get back again to the beginnings of things--"

William: "Well, just to take up that very point, you said that it seems to you that there is no point at which you began to exist. Now I agree. Perhaps there is no point at which you began to exist, but it doesn't follow from this that you didn't begin to exist. It just means that your beginning to exist is not the sort of transition that requires a particular threshold point - a precise moment at which this occurs."

Kevin: "Ah well, there *is* a precise moment when it occurs, but we decide when that moment is."

William: "Okay. If you want to precisify it, as they sometimes say, then you can do so. Sure."

Kevin: "But do you think it's fair then for me to say that, if this is the case, then our lives don't really exist in the way that people commonly believe that they do?"

William: "I don't think that follows."

Kevin: "Well, just take the average person who wants to be loved. Okay?"

William: "Okay."

Kevin: "They want to be appreciated because they have a definite idea that they exist. They look at the big wide world and the big universe around them and they see that it is so big and so cold and so dangerous, and that they're so small and insignificant. So they *need* something. They need something warm

and loving. This obviously comes from a view that they had come into existence at some point and they'll have a limited amount of time on this earth and then die. Now, of course, these thoughts don't occur to me because I know that my life never had a real beginning, other than what I arbitrarily talk about. And because my life has no beginning I know it has no end - other than in appearance to the gross senses. So it is very important what position people take on this philosophy."

William: "I think there is lurking there a very misleading inference that somebody might draw. By saying that there is no precise end to my life, you can slide into saying that 'therefore there is no end to my life', and that 'therefore my life is eternal'. Now it seems to me that we should resist that slide."

Kevin: "Why?"

William: "Why ... ?"

Tuan: "Well, as we philosophers say, it's a bad argument!"

Kevin: "Oh, that convinces me! No, really, if there is no beginning to my life other than what I project ... logically, what has no beginning cannot have an end."

William: "Well, there *is* a beginning, even though there is no precise point you can call the beginning."

Kevin: "But there is a beginning?"

William: "Yes."

David: "Can you explain that, William?"

William: "Just thinking once again to that example I gave earlier. In the year 1900, I clearly did not exist. Now you might say that trying to specify the exact moment when William Grey did begin to exist - whether it's at conception, or the gradual development of conscious awareness or whatever ... maybe it's going to be just a matter of convention or decision when we are going to say, 'Okay, no William Grey before then but there is one after that point'. This seems to be entering into the artificial business of boundary drawing. Nevertheless, it seems to me to be very clear that there was no William Grey in 1900 and there will be no William Grey, say, in 2100."

Kevin: "Well, if I can perceive some of William Grey back in the 1900's, would you concede that you did exist back then?"

William: "I don't know how you can perceive anything except in 1995!"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "I can perceive that a lot of your thinking and consciousness has evolved out of the English philosophical traditions. I can see some of this in you - going on my intuition."

William: "Yes."

Kevin: "So I see some of your immortal nature here. I can see your own self, what you really are - your spirit if you like. I'm not talking some New Age stuff here, just simple cause and effect. I can see you going back to what you have come from. I can see what you have been made from. And what you've been made from surely is a part of you, just like the atoms in your body are a part of you. The academic philosophical tradition you've been made from is to some degree part of you. So, in this sense, it's very real to think of a person as existing in this immortal way."

William: "Yeah, well, I would deny all the causal antecedents for any particular item, object, or person are a part of that person. It seems to me that that would mean the entire history of the universe was a part of us all. I know a lot of people would regard this as being a perfectly reasonable conclusion to draw, but I just regard that as metaphysically extravagant. I am aware that there are lots of respectable dissenters from my view."

David: "I tend to see it this way. Christians, in order to see God in nature around them, they first have a *faith*. Their God is a faith - they don't really have any evidence or reasons for His existence. But once they have this faith, then they go out and look for Him. They look about in their environment for God and, lo and behold, they see Him! So in the same way people have a kind of a faith in "things" and in 'life'. There are no real reasons to believe in 'life'. Yet, like the Christian, we go out into the world and, lo and

behold, we see it! Have you got anything to say, Tuan?"

Tuan: "Well, to me, the relevant question is: What is the importance of all this? What hangs on this business of having a beginning or end or whatever? At one point, you were talking about knowing how to relate to other people and knowing how to behave properly, and so on and so forth. It just seems that as far as this goes nothing much hangs on the metaphysical issue that you raise unless and until we can sort out the relationship between the knowledge of when my life came into existence, if it ever did, and that of how I should behave towards you and other people as my fellow human beings. Until then, it just doesn't seem to matter all that much."

Kevin: "Well, okay, just to close up, I'd like to sort of state the obvious, I suppose. For a person who believes he never came into existence and never goes out of existence - which is my faith, if you like, a faith in what I know to be true, which is very hard to do because some truths are very hard to believe - it takes away the need for love. It takes away the need for everything that people emotionally need. It takes away the need for violence; it takes away the need for warmth; it takes away the need for fashion and lies and all the nonsense that fills our whole society and replaces it with a life which ... sometimes you consider as existing, and sometimes you consider as being the entire world. It's a marvelous thing."

William: "Some echoes of Spinoza, I think."

Kevin: "Perhaps he was a past life."

David: "Alright. Kevin and I will be back next week. Thanks to Dr Tuan Nuyen and Dr William Grey. Thank you very much."

William: "A pleasure."

Tuan: "Thank you."⁴⁹

BUDDHISM

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -
Copyright (c) 1995 Kevin Solway & David Quinn

Guests:

- Do-Kwang Su nim - Zen monk
- Mervin Thomas - Buddhist practitioner

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

"Buddhism is easily the coldest religion on earth. While other religions preach submission to an almighty being, Buddhism advocates independence, self-reliance and the pursuit of reason. Its goal is nothing less than the complete understanding of reality. What magnificence! But don't look to the Buddhists of today for guidance in these matters. They are as effeminate as Christians. They hate reality with a vengeance and do everything they can to banish reason from their minds. In effect, there are two types of Buddhism in existence. There is popular Buddhism with its temples, robes, rituals, chanting, meditation, gurus, acts of compassion, prayer wheels and all the rest. Then there is true Buddhism, the path of relinquishing all attachments. Millions flock to the temples and the gurus, but true Buddhism is practiced by very few. While monks and gurus regularly give "teachings" to their devoted followers in friendly environs, it is rare for their understanding to be challenged in any significant way. This is particularly true in these backward times of ours where false compassion reigns and reason is derided. Who among us is capable of confronting these gurus with a brandished sword, ready to behead any who make a false move? Indeed, who even believes that gurus should be confronted at all? Kevin and I thought it was high time at least one of them was brought before *The Hour of Judgment*. I rang the Brisbane Zen Centre and asked if anyone there was serious about Buddhism. The man at the other end of the line said, "Well, I'm a monk! Is that serious enough for you?" Despite his Australian accent, he called himself Do Kwang and said that he would love to come onto the program and "spread the message". Indeed, when a white caucasian, with head shaved and dressed in grey robes, strode into the studios

on Sunday evening - looking more like a John Brown than a Do Kwang - he certainly appeared ready for business. His face was grim, his mind seemed focused. His colleague, however, seemed a little less sure of himself. Mervin Thomas, an Englishman who taught mathematics, looked upon us warily for some reason, as if half-expecting us to suddenly leap at his throat. Perhaps he didn't like our scruffy clothes. Perhaps he was put off by our intellectual demeanour. I tried to reassure them both by saying that Kevin and myself considered ourselves to be enlightened and on the Buddhist path to perfection, and that they should regard the coming discussion as one of getting to the nitty-gritty of Buddhism. Think of it, I said, as four experts on Zen leisurely thrashing around the Dharma. Whether this calmed them or not, I do not know, but it certainly got the conversation into a proper focus within a very short space of time."

▷ ◊

David: "Hello everyone. Welcome to *The Hour of Judgment*. My name is David Quinn and tonight's topic is Buddhism. Tonight's guests are two practitioners of Korean Zen Buddhism - their names are Do Kwang Su-Nim, who is actually an ordained monk, and Mervin Thomas, a senior practitioner and director of the Korean Zen group of Brisbane. Is that right?"

Do Kwang: "The Dae Kwang Sa Zen Temple in Brisbane."

David: "Okay then. Over the next hour I'd like to come to grips with, or really get to the bottom of, what Buddhism is. What is the Buddhist path to enlightenment? And so I might open with that question, actually, to you, Do Kwang. What is Buddhism to you? What is the spiritual path?"

Do Kwang: "Good evening. Well, quite simply, the Buddha's teaching was to understand the origins of suffering and how to overcome the worldly suffering. He recommended that we should be, within ourselves, meditative and aware moment by moment,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

and we should attempt to quieten the mind in order to allow our Buddha-Nature, our true nature, to come to the surface, so that we see things more clearly moment by moment. And in order to do that we have to put down opinions, ideas and so on, so that we can see things just as they are."

David: "Merv, does this resonate with you? Or do you have something to add to it?"

Merv: "It certainly resonates with me. Yes, I agree with it. I suppose for me being a Buddhist means learning to live not for *me*. It means learning to live for other people instead of selfishly for myself. It means learning to put down the little self - the little me."

David: "Okay then, we might just move on to the reasons why you became a monk, Do Kwang. Why did you choose the particular school that you did? It's Zen. It's Korean Zen. It's related to Ch'an, which is the Chinese Zen. Chinese Zen actually gave off to Japanese Zen as well, didn't it?"

Do Kwang: "Yes."

David: "You could say that the three are related - the three Zens - in the sense that they're completely different to other types of Buddhism, like Indian Buddhism or Tibetan Buddhism. Those types of Buddhism are very structured. There are huge scriptures in which all the nuances of everything to do with the Buddhist path are meticulously analyzed - they've got thousands of categories for everything. Whereas in the Zen tradition you've basically done away with a lot of that and you've just concentrated on the "direct pointing to Reality", that sort of thing. But on the other hand, Zen still has its traditions and its own way of doing things. I wonder if you could elaborate a little bit on why you chose Zen?"

Do Kwang: "Well, first up, I chose to become a monk because Australia is really a Dharma-desert. There really is very little Buddhist teaching of any substance in this country. Most of the Buddhist temples in this country are of ethnic origin where it is mostly cultural influences rather than the teachings and the practices of the Buddhist system. So in order to be constructive and help spread the Dharma I thought it would be good to just wear the badge, if you will, the uniform, because this is what people seem to look for. To make the personal commitment, because as Merv said we have to serve other people. It

is quite easy to go through our lives chasing the Dharma for ourselves, but that doesn't help the rest of the community. But as for Korean Zen ... well, how I came to sit with that was that I tried Japanese Zen, I tried Vipasyana, I tried Tibetan, and nothing seemed to sort of really fit in. And then I heard a Kwang Om master, the late So Bunkosa, at a talk, and within two minutes of hearing this man speaking I realized that this man was my teacher. He was actually making sense. For the first time I'd come across a Zen teacher, or a teacher of the Buddha-dharma, who actually made sense. He spoke in such a way that you didn't have to be an intellectual to understand it. He reached right down to the grass roots. And I've since heard other teachers from the same lineage give lectures and they're all the same. They all teach the grass roots, and that's unique because Zen is a very difficult subject to talk on and these guys did it so well. They won me."

David: "I'd like to have a look at more about choosing a Zen master or a guru, because it's a very important issue here. Ah ... I've lost my train of thought actually ..."

Kevin: "Well, you were saying that within two minutes or so you were won over to this particular type of Zen. Are there any particular words that he used that you can recall?"

Do Kwang: "Yes, there were."

Kevin: "And what were those words?"

Do Kwang: "It was more or less his opening line. He said, 'If what you are practicing in the meditation room is not relevant to your everyday life, it's a crock of shit'."

Kevin: "That's a pretty good teaching!"

Do Kwang: "And I mean, that's the basic fact. What we do in the meditation room is less than 5% of our lives. And in the rest of our lives, how do we live it? How do we handle each moment just as it happens? How do we go through our lives relating to other people and to situations? This is what is important, and this is what the teaching guides us, and this is what they tried to tell us."

Kevin: "Okay, perhaps we can move on now to exactly how we do this. How do we live in each moment seeing Reality just as it is, without projecting unnecessary things onto what's already there? How do we keep life simple for that matter? Obviously there are some things that we are doing which we

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

shouldn't be doing. What are those things? Can you put it into a few words what it is that we're doing which we shouldn't be doing? Any ideas, either of you?"

Merv: "Focus on ourselves, all the time. How does this affect me? What's in it for me?"

Kevin: "And why shouldn't ..."

Merv: "Me, me, me, me, me!"

Kevin: "And why shouldn't we focus on ourselves? It seems like most people do it."

Merv: "Yes."

Kevin: "Obviously they can find good reasons to do so."

Merv: "And I do it constantly, all the time."

Kevin: "Yes."

Merv: "And it's fiendishly difficult not to. You can't even achieve not doing it by trying not to do it. Why shouldn't we do it? It's an act of faith with us, a statement of our faith that we find ourselves most completely when we stop focusing on ourselves. That we realize our true self when we cease to be preoccupied with ourselves and give ourselves to others."

Kevin: "Okay. This still doesn't explain, to my mind ... you'd be familiar with a lot of the New Age teachings, and a lot of what I get from them is that if it feels good, do it! This is probably the philosophy of most people, actually. So people try something and it gives them a feeling of satisfaction, a bit of a glow, a feeling of peace, maybe - like listening to music, for example. People do it once, it feels good, so they do it again and again and again. How does your religion differ from this?"

Do Kwang: "It's not so much a question of how our religion differs from this, it's more a question of: how do we deal with this? You see, our practice is to actually try and put down the self - but at the same time not deny the self. So what we do is we sit and we try to teach ourselves that each and every one of us is perfect and complete just as we are. I suppose it's a bit like building up your own self-esteem. But if we realize that every one of us is perfect and complete just as we are, then we can learn to believe in ourselves a hundred percent. If we can believe in ourselves a hundred percent, then we can believe in everyone else a hundred percent. This builds love. This builds compassion, and wisdom. And with that we can then look at each mo-

ment just as it happens, without opinion, without prejudice. We must learn to accept, just truly accept, life, rather than to try and make something out of it when it's really not there."

Kevin: "This is the problem: if people *knew* what they really were, they'd find it a lot easier to live just as they are. I think the problem with most people is that they have no idea what they really are, so they find it impossible to live in that state. What is the state in which we really are? Most people believe that we are born at some time, that we live a certain period of time and then we die. Some people believe in an afterlife, going to heaven or hell or whatever. The majority of people, I think, believe you just die and you're buried under the ground and that's that. Is this the way we really are? What do you think?"

Do Kwang: "When we're born, we're born perfect and complete. When we die, we die perfect and complete. The trouble is we lose sight of this. You see, in our childhood, our parents - well meaning as they are - condition us. Our peers, as we grow up, condition us. Society conditions us. So we grow up with this conditioned mind, and with this conditioned mind we lose sight of the Truth, we lose sight of Reality."

Kevin: "Okay, what do you think of reincarnation? When most people think of Buddhism they think of reincarnation. It's not so much an important part of Zen, but it's an important part of where Zen came from. If you look in the Buddhist scriptures there are references to reincarnation."

Do Kwang: "'Reincarnation' is not really a good way to actually put it. I'd say 're-existence of consciousness'."

Kevin: "Okay, can you speak a bit more on how our consciousness re-exists after a life?"

Do Kwang: "Well, I can only speak on what the Buddha told us--"

Kevin: "Can you speak from your own knowledge on this?"

Do Kwang: "My own knowledge! Well, I obviously have no sound knowledge on the subject because I'm not dead! [Laughter] But however, it's a question of clinging to attachments, clinging to ideas - all forms of clinging, all forms of craving. That's what binds us, and that's the idea of seeking enlightenment. I try not to use the word 'en-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

lightenment' too much, but you see what we're trying to do is to put down ideas, opinions, and to just accept things. The Buddha said, 'All things are suffering in life'. He said, 'There is suffering in birth, sickness, old age and death. There is suffering in attachments to loved ones, attachments to possessions, even attachments to situations, and attachments to the senses.' He recommended that we should look for a way to put down these attachments and he recommended that we be meditative. A small quote of his was, 'Be unto thyself thine own salvation. The Buddha has shown you the way, and the one who is meditative will be his own salvation from suffering.'"

Kevin: "I'd like to concentrate a bit more on this subject of life and death. I think it really is getting to the core of what Truth really is, and what we really are. If we're going to live as we really are, as our true selves, then we have to understand our own life and death. This also means understanding our own consciousness - what consciousness actually is, whether consciousness is restricted to our bodies or not. Is our consciousness inside our bodies for the whole of our lives, before travelling to another place? You'd be familiar with the Tibetan Buddhists. They have a very strong tradition where they believe that some form of subtle consciousness goes from one body at death to another body - in a linear fashion, one life following another life, with some small exceptions. And they believe this literally right from the top - to the Dalai Lama himself, who is himself supposedly the 16th incarnation of a certain kind of Buddha. From your own knowledge - I'm speaking about *your own* knowledge, not what the scriptures say - have you thought about this to any degree?"

Merv: "I don't think this is relevant. I don't think it's relevant because I ask the question: does the literal truth of reincarnation or otherwise have any influence on my practice or on why I practise, or on how I live my life? And the answer I think is no. It is irrelevant, so I put it down. I don't waste my time speculating about something I can never know."

David: "But it goes to the core of looking at your *self*. I mean, we are talking about the subject of 'self', and the question of what it is that reincarnates is a very important one. Because if you understand what the self is or

if you understand what reincarnation is - they're both interrelated questions. So, this is why we're approaching this--"

Merv: "I'm unconvinced of that."

David: "Well, some people say that consciousness reincarnates, that it survives death. So some people would say that this is actually your self - your consciousness is your true self. So from what you were saying before, that the idea is to live to your true self, then that would mean trying to live to your consciousness in some way."

Kevin: "Well, it means you understand whether there is reincarnation or not - if you understand your own self."

Do Kwang: "On a personal point of view, I do believe that consciousness does re-exist. I don't think any of us can fully understand it or explain it. It's a question of belief, a personal belief."

Kevin: "You must obviously have some reasons for having this personal belief."

Do Kwang: "I have a deep seated belief in love and the Buddha's teachings, and it stems from that. Other than that, I can't really say ... maybe it's just knowing. That's what the Buddha-Nature's all about, just knowing."

David: "Can I ask, are you enlightened yourself? Are you an enlightened man?"

Do Kwang: "I can answer that by ... in the Diamond Sutra, the Tathagata, the Buddha, said to Subhuti, 'Tell me, Subhuti, were the Tathagata to say he was enlightened would he truly be the Tathagata?' And Subhuti said, 'World Honoured One, if I understand the Tathagata's teachings, were he to say that he was the Tathagata he would not be the Tathagata. For him to say that he is the Tathagata would be the existence of a self, an ego, therefore he would not be that.'"

David: "Yes, but presumably the Buddha himself was enlightened, and he knew it. He knew himself to be enlightened and he proclaimed it. For example, after his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, people would come up to him and say, 'You look different'. And He said, 'I know everything. I understand life and death, everything.' So, by your own criterion there, the Buddha was a deluded man!"

[Laughter]

Do Kwang: "All of us have a small amount of that in us."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

David: "Alright, so you were talking about this love of Buddhist teachings and all that sort of stuff. Now to my way of thinking this depends on your own wisdom. Whether you're actually interpreting the Buddha's teachings correctly or not depends on your own wisdom. So regarding any set of teachings - they could be Buddhist or they could be Christian - there are always many ways to interpret them. And obviously, for this type of material, there's only one correct interpretation and that is the wise interpretation. So to really understand Buddhism you have to be wise yourself - it is the number one priority. So you don't claim this knowledge at all, then, that you actually *understand* reality?"

Do Kwang: "Well, it is generally believed that we are all enlightened, but we just don't see it. And of course, when wisdom grows, enlightenment does appear. It is a fact that we are all enlightened, moment by moment, but that we tend to cloud it over with opinions and ideas."

David: "Alright, so there are two states. You can say for practical purposes that there are two states. There is the ignorant state and there is the enlightened state. This is definite. The Buddha himself was definitely enlightened - he definitely wasn't ignorant. Ignorant people are definitely deluded. So would you say about yourself that you're actually enlightened in this definite sense?"

Do Kwang: "I would not say that I am totally enlightened. I would say that I'm trying very hard to become enlightened."

David: "Okay, so it should be fair to say, then, that since you're not enlightened you can't claim knowledge of the Buddha's teachings - not in their fundamental sense. You must necessarily *guess*, at bottom, what the Buddha's teachings are."

Do Kwang: "Yeah, the only thing that understands Reality is Reality itself. The only one who truly understood the Buddha's teachings is the Buddha himself."

David: "Well, again, at bottom only an enlightened man could actually claim that. For all you know, the Buddha could have been totally unenlightened. Do you want to carry on, Kevin?"

Kevin: "Yeah, okay. Further on this subject that only Reality can know itself. It can only know itself if it has a consciousness. So I would define enlightenment as conscious-

ness of Ultimate Reality. So, in this sense, to say that everybody is enlightened is absolutely false, based on this definition of enlightenment. If enlightenment is a consciousness of Reality, then in no way is everybody enlightened. In fact, everybody is *ignorant* - probably everybody in the world. Maybe there are a few who are enlightened - who knows? All this is very clear. So I think to tell people - average people out on the street - that they are in fact enlightened and they can put down their evil lives - their lives which are one hundred percent evil, from the time they wake up in the morning, right throughout the day and throughout the night time--"

Merv: "I don't think their lives are one hundred percent evil. I don't think I've met anyone who's life was one hundred percent evil."

Kevin: "Okay, this is an interesting point. We'll concentrate on this now."

Merv: "Even me!"

Kevin: "Well, if evil is anything at all, it is ignorance. I can't think of anything else that evil could possibly be other than ignorance, because all bad actions come from ignorance. So ignorance is the fundamental evil in the world."

David: "Are you saying a will to ignorance? Or just ignorance?"

Kevin: "That's even worse. It's bad enough being ignorant but to actually--"

Merv: "More fundamentally evil than the fundamental evil, you mean?"

Kevin: "Well, actually wanting to be ignorant is pretty bad. But this too comes from being ignorant. Everybody out there is extremely ignorant. Their whole lives are attachments. They go from one attachment to another, they know none other than attachment. It's not their fault. I'm not blaming them for a minute. It's the way they are. It's the way Nature has made them. It's the way their parents have..."

Merv: It's certainly true of me.

Kevin: "Well, this is what I call evil, so congratulations, you're evil. We all have this devil in us. It's quite natural. I think accepting this is one of the most important steps. It's actually the first of the Noble Truths, isn't it - the knowledge of ignorance, or the knowledge of suffering. Knowing you've got a disease is the first step of getting rid of that disease. So I go out into the world and rather

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

than telling people they're all enlightened, I tell them they're evil."

Do Kwang: "It's a good way to make friends, isn't it?"

Merv: "Do you make many converts?"

Kevin: "Is this what the Zen Masters do in your tradition?"

Do Kwang: "No. The Zen Masters actually try to teach us to believe in ourselves, to try and actually see the good in ourselves rather than the bad. And it's not just seeing the good in ourselves, it's seeing the good in each and every one of us. Because if we start seeing the good in people rather than the evil in people, then we'll start seeing people in a different light. It's a bit more positive than that."

David: "Yes, but that good has to exist, doesn't it? I mean, we're talking about an *ultimate philosophy* here. Zen is suppose to be about Ultimate Truth and Ultimate Wisdom. So I prefer to use a very lofty standpoint in judging these people. I'd call someone good if he was actually wise, if he actually understood the Buddha, if he actually understood Reality. That would be good. And therefore attachment and delusion, as we were talking about before, is evil. So on this basis, virtually everybody is evil."

Kevin: "And there's no good at all to be seen in them. If a person had a tendency towards the desire for knowledge - true knowledge - then the seeds of goodness would be there. But where are the seeds of goodness?"

Merv: "This is a very pretty word game but does it really mean anything? To say that people are fundamentally evil just flies in the face of direct human experience of the amount of kindness and generosity you find all over the place, and in surprising places, unlooked for, unexpected, spontaneously present. That's part of my daily reality, and I suggest that it's also part of your daily reality."

David: "But, again, we're talking about an ultimate philosophy here. We're talking about the highest spiritual wisdom. This is what Zen is about, apparently."

Merv: "I'm very, very sceptical that the highest spiritual wisdom has got anything to do with an ultimate philosophy."

David: "Understanding Ultimate Reality. Living directly in Reality."

Do Kwang: "What is Reality?"

David: "What is Reality? Well ..."

Do Kwang: "Outside it is dark, inside the light is on. Is there anything beyond that?"

David: "... How would you answer that one, Kevin?"

Kevin: "I'd need time to think about that one!"

Do Kwang: "By just thinking you've missed the point."

Kevin: "Wrong. Okay, what is Reality? Let's get into some intellectual discussion."

Merv: "Oh, do we have to?"

Kevin: "I'm afraid so. People believe that things have a beginning and that they have an end. This goes for their own life as well. It goes for everything. When you actually analyse and try to find the beginning of things, you can't find it. Sure, these things appear to us and they have practical value. I can say that I was born x number of years ago and this has practical value. But when you actually try to find a real beginning it's not there, because it is all part of a process which is infinite. This 'infinite' - for want of a better word, as there is no easy way to explain it - it's up there, it's to do with the Dharma. This 'infinite', this substance of existence, composes all existence. This is pointing in the direction now towards real wisdom. Now, when ordinary people are aware of this truth, and not just aware of it, but when it has permeated and infiltrated every little nook and cranny of their minds - which takes years to happen - then, and only then, will their spontaneous actions be a reflection of that wisdom."

Merv: "I'm not quite sure what that means. I'm not sure whether you're saying that you have to gain intellectual mastery of a particular set of propositions before you can realise the truth of your being. If so, I think you're wrong. I don't think this important sort of realization has got anything to do with intellect or anything to do with rational analytical thought."

Do Kwang: "If you look at the history of Zen, if you look right back to the sixth patriarch, Hui Neng - totally illiterate, couldn't read, couldn't write."

Kevin: "Sounds like me!"

Do Kwang: "A few of us. But there was no intellectualizing with them back then. He clearly understood the Dharma, and if you go

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

back further to that, if you go right back to Bodhidharma - that man was not an intellectual. As a matter of fact, he didn't fit into the Buddhism of the time because the Buddhism of the time in China was an intellectual Buddhism, where they used to study sutras. In order to study sutras you had to be educated, so you were amongst a privileged few."

David: "Yes, alright, but I'd like to make a distinction between this scholarly intellectualism - this sort of 'metaphysical' stuff which intellectual philosophers do - and *discrimination*, intellectual discrimination, discrimination between what is true and what is false. Just before, you were describing Buddhism as giving up attachments. In fact, one can describe the enlightened state as total non-attachment. This includes giving up false views of Reality. And to expose these false views of Reality requires *thought*. It requires actually reasoning and weeding out what is false and contradictory in our minds. Because enlightenment encompasses an intellectual understanding as well. When the Buddha was enlightened, and he was asked - 'You look different, what's happened?', he said, 'I know everything'. This was an intellectual understanding - as well as a direct understanding. We live in an age where the intellect has been played down a lot, especially over the past few decades, especially with the rise in popularity of Eastern philosophy, and it encourages this idea of giving up reason and rational thinking in favor of some kind of 'direct experience' of Zen, or whatever. And I think this is very bad. Because what it does is encourage people to just stop thinking. They stop thinking about their lives and their actions. Whereas I would rather have people think about what the self is. What is the self? What is life and death? All that sort of stuff. It's very, very important."

Merv: "I think you could raise those questions, 'What am I?' ... in fact, I do every day for an hour raise the question 'What am I?' But in my belief you don't gain any helpful understanding of this by trying to answer it analytically. The process for answering this question, I believe, which is our practise, is to sit with the question, is to sit with the 'I don't know' mind."

David: "I define enlightenment as the elimination of all false thoughts - *totally*. So in Chinese Zen, for example, like Huang Po and

the others, they talk about giving up concepts, about stopping the conceptual process. I see this as giving up everything that is false. You could say that it involves an analytical process in the sense that one has to see what is false in oneself, and this requires conscious thought. Otherwise, all the falseness is just going to stay there."

Merv: "Well, again, I'm unconvinced by that. I think seeing what is true involves the direct experience that you find in meditation rather than a process of analytical reasoning. I don't believe that you can intellectualize or philosophise your way into enlightenment. I don't know, because I'm not enlightened."

Kevin: "We'll just have a short musical break, a bit of Zen music from Johann Sebastian Bach, and we'll come back to this very subject."

[MUSIC BREAK]

David: "Well, Kevin tells me that this music goes on forever ... but we'd better stop it there and go back to the conversation. Now, we were talking about the role of the intellect. You say that the intellect should be ... how would you put it ... stifled?"

Merv: "No, no. The intellect is very useful. There are all sorts of things you can't do without the intellect. You can't discover lifesaving pharmaceuticals without the intellect. You can't build bridges without the intellect. The intellect is extremely useful. It has a necessary sphere of application."

David: "But not with Zen? Not with understanding or gaining direct experience of Reality?"

Merv: "Not, I believe, in that context."

David: "But because you're not enlightened, you're not sure?"

Merv: "I won't make any dogmatic claims about it."

Do Kwang: "The intellect forms opinions. The intellect is a conditioned form of thinking. It has opinions. It has prejudices. Personal opinions and personal prejudices have nothing to do with Reality."

Kevin: "I agree with you there, but is the intellect always, in all people, conditioned in the false way? Is the intellect always false? Obviously not, because in wise people the intellect is true and the intellect reasons truly. When a wise person reasons something it's not the case that this is just his "personal opinion". You can say that about an ignorant

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

person who's living in some sort of fantasy world, but you can't say that about a wise person. Because the wise person has reasoned to such a degree that his reasoning is actually correct."

Merv: "Reasoning about what? What are we reasoning about?"

Kevin: "Whatever, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what he reasons about."

Do Kwang: "It would be quite interesting to know to what extent the ego is there in these wise people of your's, because our practise is not to put down the self, or to put down yourself, but to put down the ego. And in order to do this we sit and we reflect inwardly and we allow the wisdom to grow. We allow understanding to manifest itself. Because every one of us in this world, or most of us at least, seems to think that this entire universe is here just for "me". The fact is, it's not."

Kevin: "How would you define the ego? You're saying we have to drop the ego, but the only way we know whether we have actually dropped the ego is if we know what the ego is. That is, we must first identify what the ego is. If we're in a war and we don't know what the enemy looks like then we're in trouble, because the enemy could immediately jump up in front of us with a machine gun, and since we don't recognise them as our enemy, we're dead. Now what kind of thought is involved in identifying what the ego is? I'll tell you, it's intellectual thought."

Merv: "I don't think you need to identify what the ego is. I think that what we're aiming for is spontaneous giving and spontaneous generosity - generosity without thinking. I am acting in the Bodhisattva way when there is generosity and giving, without me intellectually working out that I should be generous. Doing it spontaneously and in the instant."

Kevin: "You said that you wanted to drop something, but now you're saying that you don't want to know what is that has to be dropped!"

Merv: "I think that when I have achieved, if I ever achieve, the state of living the Bodhisattva life, it won't even occur to me that I'm giving something up. It won't even occur to me that I'm being kind or generous, I will just do it. That's my ideal. That's what I

would like to achieve. But of course, my life at present is a long way from that."

David: "Are you suggesting that the Buddha is an unconscious being?"

Merv: "No. I'm not suggesting that one is unconscious. I'm suggesting that one is conscious of the needs of the people around you, and that the Buddha moves instinctively to fill those needs."

Do Kwang: "I think that what he's trying to say is that enlightenment, really, is not living for yourself but living for others."

David: "But this still requires knowing what the self is. So we're back to that point. Okay, so how do we go about understanding what the self is? This seems to be crucial, if it's the case that living a good and wise life means living without the self."

Merv: "We believe that there is a process for finding out truly what the self is, and that process, or a manifestation of that process, is the formal Zen training which we participate in."

David: "And that would include meditation and so forth?"

Merv: "Meditation, discussion with a teacher, but primarily meditation."

David: "Okay, so you meditate and you come upon some sort of knowledge, some sort of insight of what the self is."

Merv: "One hopes so."

David: "But the question then would immediately rise in my mind, because I value truth to a great degree, is: How do I know that I'm not deluded in this picture of self?"

Merv: "The opportunities for self-delusion in meditation are enormous because you have quite powerful experiences in meditation which may mean something or may mean absolutely nothing."

David: "So this is where the importance of reasoning comes in. You're integrating what you gain in meditation with everything else, so you can get a consistent world-view."

Do Kwang: "I think you find that the more you sit the more you realize that your opinions of Reality have very little grounding. I could quote a Zen Roshi, but I choose not to because he was rather explicit in that."

David: "You're saying that it's your *opinion* that opinions about Reality are not worthwhile?"

Do Kwang: "The more you sit the more you realize that your opinions--"

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

David: "The more you sit the more you come to this opinion?"

Do Kwang: "Yeah. No, no, no! The more you *realize*. The more you realize."

Kevin: "Taking drugs has this same effect too. People who take a lot of drugs realize that Reality is not how one normally sees it. So how is this meditation any different to taking drugs?"

Do Kwang: "Well, you see, most people are confused in thinking that the meditation only starts when you sit on the cushion and ends when you stand up. It must actually be in every moment of our waking lives. We must be aware of our intentions, we must be aware at all times of our actions, we must be aware of that which is around us. Instead of reacting to situations, we should just act to them in a positive way. So we must take our meditation practise and put it moment to moment in our lives, to try and avoid the wandering mind. When you walk down the street from here to your car, where is your mind when you're walking to the car? Is it with each step? Or is it on what's on at the movies at the moment?"

Kevin: "If you're on drugs it is probably with each step, I'd say. You see, this kind of perfect consciousness, if you want to call it that, this extreme awareness in which there is a complete absence of fear or even desire - this is what I would call an altered state of consciousness. Altered states of consciousness are very common. In fact, virtually everybody alive has had some sort of - I won't call it profound - memorable experience of an altered state of consciousness. But this has nothing whatsoever to do with wisdom. Nothing to do with the spiritual path. It is just an altered state of consciousness full stop - because no understanding is gleaned from these experiences. Sure, they are blissful, they are timeless, blah, blah, blah - but what do they tell people about life and death? Do they come to know who they are? This is what it gets back to - life and death. Is there birth? Is there death? Are we immortal? What's the purpose of life? You were speaking before about how we should help other people; I mean to me--"

Merv: "Do you think helping other people is irrational because it is predicated on their lives being important? Your life has importance to help other people; their life has

only importance to help someone else - where does it end? I mean, are you worried that it leads to some kind of infinite recursion?"

Kevin: "I do not see that these other people exist in Reality. In other words, they are illusory. And if the existence of these other people is an illusion, then living your life to help other people is extremely deluded and extremely ignorant. It is evil, in fact."

Do Kwang: "It's a wonderful form of evil, though, isn't it?"

Kevin: "No, it's not. I mean, an awful lot of harm is done by helping other people. Take Hitler, for example. He was a very compassionate man who for the good of the world decided he would eliminate inferior races from the planet ..."

Merv: "He didn't believe that they were human. He defined them as not being people. He wasn't responding to their true reality. He wasn't allowing himself to perceive their true reality. He needed to deny his experience of the "now" of their lives. He needed to deny that and define them as monsters and goblins and demons so that he could destroy them. I don't think that's got ... I mean, this is just a silly word game!"

Kevin: "Ah, but isn't it the same? I mean, if we see all people as good, as being fundamentally good, and we want to help them, then this also is destroying something. It destroys me for a start, because I live for my thought and my consciousness. I want my consciousness to have an impact on the world. Now - I'll just finish this line of thought ... my line of thought is that people are not only - well, I can't say that they are fundamentally evil - they are just evil. The way they are at the moment is by definition evil, by my reasoning. I want to get rid of this evil and replace it with wisdom and enlightenment and truth. So any idea which hinders this is destructive to my life and to my consciousness. So the average Christian, for example, who just wants to live a simple life of going out and helping people, without thinking about it very much, just spontaneous helping and giving, is completely destructive to my life. So in this sense, that person is the same as Hitler and the Nazis of that period."

Merv: "I think this is the worse sort of sophistry I've ever heard! I think this is a fundamental spitting in the face of reality, if you'll forgive the strength of the expression! I

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

think you're denying something direct and human in saying that and taking refuge in a silly intellectual game - in spite of the true day-to-day experience of human goodness and human generosity. That was said in a way that could be very offensive - I'm sorry if it came across that way."

Kevin: "Well, you know--"

Merv: "It just strikes me as being odd!"

Kevin: "No, I have to state the truth exactly as I see it. And I'm looking out to preserve my own existence here - as I said before, I identify myself with my thought. My way of thinking - and David's too, for he shares my way of thinking - is virtually non-existent in the world today. And so we have to preserve it and we have to preserve it strongly."

Merv: "Why?"

Kevin: "Well, because when there is a very vigorous disease you have to apply a very strong antidote to it. And so we apply the strongest antidote possible."

Merv: "What disease? What is this disease?"

Do Kwang: "That is your right to think that way."

Kevin: "That's true, but the basic point is that whatever people do in this world is necessarily destructive to something. I like to think that my life is destructive of ignorance. People have a right, if you like, to be as ignorant as they like - but at the same time, I have a right to destroy the thing that they love. They love ignorance, they love their family, and their children, and their lovers, and sex, and the television, and everything. And I have a right, just as they do, to destroy the things that they love. Everything that we do in life destroys something. Life and death is a very important part of life. This gets back to understanding the self."

Merv: "Short of painting ourselves green and standing outside in the sun and photosynthesising, we certainly have to destroy in order to live - that's a part of living. But what gives you the right to look at the lives of other people, whom you seem to be defining as ordinary people, and say 'my' views and 'my' opinions are so important that 'I' should be able to destroy what they hold dear. This seems to me to be a very powerful form of egoism."

Do Kwang: "Actually, the three poisons of the mind are greed, hatred and delusion. I really think that your view is the latter."

Kevin: "It doesn't surprise me! Perhaps we should get on to the subject of authority. It looks as if we've got ten minutes left. You were saying before, in the break while we had the music on, that authority is a very important part of your tradition. By what process do you arrive at an authority? You'd be aware that there are many authorities, many different religions - even in Buddhism there are hundreds of different schools. You were saying that of all the teachers you have heard - probably hundreds - only a few actually appeal to you. Authority. How did you come, do you think, to arrive at an authority? And why is an authority important?"

Merv: "An authority is important because of something we talked about earlier, which is the opportunity for self-delusion, particularly in meditation where you get very intense experiences. You can dress these experiences up and make them far more significant than they are. We have a very strong capacity for deluding ourselves. And testing our experiences against a teacher, against somebody who has walked this path before us is--"

David: "You *assume* he has walked it. This is it. You're not sure at bottom whether he has or not."

Merv: "I have a faith in my teacher. I have a faith in the process which has produced my teacher."

David: "Faith ... ?"

Merv: "Is that a dirty word? Buddhism is a religion, you know. Faith is an integral part of religion."

David: "I'd rather have faith in my own mind. That's what it all comes down to. Even choosing one teacher over another comes down to an act of your own mind. It's some sort of act on your part, whether you're responding to some sort of gut feeling or whatever. Now, I'd rather trust my mind fully in a rational fashion."

Do Kwang: "You find that when you meet the teacher who is for you, there's something that tells you - I can't put my finger on exactly what it is - but there is something inside you that says to you ..."

Merv: "I've come home."

Do Kwang: "Yeah, I've come home."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

David: "The only problem is that there's an awful lot of religions out there, with a lot of authorities, a lot of people, a lot of gods, and they're all saying exactly the same thing at bottom, that they find something in their teacher that speaks to them personally ..."

Do Kwang: "The Buddha's advice was that when you seek a teacher you look at his teachings and you place it beside that which you know to be true and that which you know to be wrong, and if they do not match then you look further."

David: "So it comes down to reasoning again, doesn't it. It must do."

Merv: "There's certainly an element of reasoning in that."

David: "Totally!"

Merv: "Well, yeah, if my teacher, for instance, told me it was a good thing to go out and kill people I would start to have serious doubts about my teacher."

David: "There you go."

Merv: "However, that's an entirely hypothetical and totally irrelevant observation because my teacher would never say that."

Kevin: "I tell you there are teachers in Japan who do!"

Merv: "There may be teachers in Japan who say that but they're not recognized, authorized teachers in our lineage. They haven't gone through the process that our teachers have gone through to become recognized teachers."

Kevin: "Okay, you said before how we have to weigh up what the teacher says is true and what you yourself know is true. This is the way we decide who is an authority and who's not. So basically we're weighing up the wisdom of the teacher using our own wisdom. Now, the only way we can pass judgment on other people, including gurus, is if we are at least as wise as they are. We can't judge people who are more wise than ourselves because—"

Do Kwang: "The reason we seek a teacher is because we know that there is room for improvement. The reason we seek a teacher is because there is a need in our lives for enrichment. I don't mean enrichment financially but spiritually. And as I said before it's not just this country that is a Dharma-desert, this entire world is a Dharma desert. There are so many beings running around in confusion, in total delusion, and instead of hating

them and thinking they are evil, we'd serve humanity better—"

David: "Who's hating them?"

Do Kwang: "Or even considering them to be evil ... we would serve mankind much better if we were to reach out a hand and offer help."

David: "Precisely what we're doing!"

Kevin: "Okay, I'd grant that we could meet a guru and we could listen to what he says and what he says may agree with what we ourselves know to be true. So basically they're just echoing your own ideas, maybe making them a bit more articulate. And then you can make an assumption: 'This person seems to know everything that I know, so possibly they know more than I do. I'm making a guess here. It's a gamble. I think this person knows more than I do, maybe he can teach me something.'"

Merv: "No. What happens is that you build a relationship with your teacher and things happen to you during this relationship. You experience the reality of teaching. You go to a teacher confused on some point - maybe, in your koan practice - you go to a teacher uncertain about something and the teacher will ask you a question - usually - and then suddenly you go, 'Ah yes, that's it'. Yes, fundamentally, you're relying on your own judgment, you're own experience of reality, but you can see the process by which you've been brought to that small realization, and it is a process which has come from the teacher. It's the building of a relationship with a teacher through a series of events like that which is important in your practice and in your work with a teacher."

Kevin: "Tell me, of the thousands of schools of religion around the world similar to your own, similar in structure anyway, how many of those do you think are genuine? You probably both had a fair bit of experience with different religious manifestations."

Merv: "I think there is genuine spiritual insight to be gained in many of the world's religions, and none of our teachers have ever suggested that Buddhism in general, or Zen in particular, has a monopoly on truth."

Do Kwang: "One flavour does not necessarily suit all people. Zen Buddhism suits me, Christianity may suit the man down the street. That's fine. As long as they find the truth, that's all that matters."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: “Okay, we're going to have to leave it there. Thank you very much, Do Kwang and Mervin. They were both from the Korean Zen school - Do Kwang is a monk and Mervin is a senior practitioner.”

Merv: “Just a Buddhist, not a senior practitioner. Just a Buddhist.”

David: “Kevin and I will be back next week. Until then, bye for now.”⁵⁰

CHRISTIANITY

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -

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16th July, 1995

Guests:

- Rev Keith Colbert - Anglican Priest
- Rev Patrick Doulin - Anglican Priest

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

Introduction

This is an absolutely classic conversation, full of humour and insight into the Christian mentality. Some of those who listened to the program said afterwards that my introduction at the beginning of the program (where, after having just introduced myself, my mind went a total blank) was the best part and it all went downhill from there. But I disagree. I think the whole show was seamless from start to finish.

After dealing with Buddhism last week I thought it would be interesting to provide a contrast with a show on Christianity. As we had already done a program with Catholics (a demo tape produced a couple of months beforehand and which subsequently went to air later in the series), the Anglicans seemed to be the obvious choice. So I contacted the media office of the Anglican Church and asked for two of their most intelligent and serious spokespeople to discuss the fundamentals of Christianity. Reverend Keith Colbert was the name they gave me.

Keith was willing, if a bit reluctant, to take part. His hesitance seemed to stem from an uncertainty about the intention and purpose of the proposed program. When I told him that we were interested in the question of what constitutes the ethical life and what reasons exist for a person choosing Christianity as a way of life, he seemed to think that he was not the right person for the job. He suggested that we contact someone who was academically qualified on the subject of ethics. Heaven forbid! All we wanted were a couple of ordinary priests - men who were supposedly God's representatives on earth and charged with the spiritual welfare of humanity. We wanted to examine these important issues in a direct and personal fashion, and not in the bloodless realms of aca-

demic theory. Keith managed to put his doubts aside and lined up a colleague, Reverend Patrick Doulin, to accompany him. The date was set.

When Keith and Patrick arrived on Sunday, we all knew immediately that it was going to be a difficult evening. For it was clear to all of us that we were opposites in every way. Keith and Patrick are conservative middle-aged men with families, while Kevin and I are scruffy men with beards. And as the ensuing conversation makes clear, we totally disagree on virtually every point concerning wisdom and the spiritual path.

David: "Hello again and welcome to *The Hour of Judgment*. This is David Quinn speaking ... this is David Quinn speaking ..."

Kevin: "Tonight on the program we're talking to a couple of Anglican priests: Reverend Keith Colbert and Reverend Patrick Doohan. Is that right? Doulan. Tonight we want to really get to the nitty-gritty of Christianity. We can imagine that there are some young people out there listening to the program. Some of them, hopefully, are wondering what they're going to do with their lives. Perhaps some of them might even want to live a wise and noble life, like people in the past occasionally did. What reasons can you give these young people to be an Anglican? Who's going to tackle that tricky one?"

Keith: "Oh, Patrick, you're so kind. I'm Keith, for the benefit of all the listeners. Why would they be an Anglican? I suppose it's one of those things that each one of us makes our own choices about. There's a basic sort of tag that you can call Christian and that's what we're baptised as. At various times in life people make various choices about the tags they hang on themselves and each of the denominational tags have some peculiarities about themselves which may appeal to individuals at some stage of their life and so they hang it on themselves. Why an Anglican? I suppose it's really a question about what is

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

the individual genius, if you like, of the Anglican."

Kevin: "I tell you what. First, why a Christian?"

Keith: "Why a Christian?"

Kevin: "For example, we have Buddhism which claims that there is no God. So Buddhists believe that there is an Ultimate Reality that can be realized. An enlightened man or an enlightened person understands this Ultimate Reality and is in tune with it. But there is no belief in any kind of creator in Buddhism. There is no actual concept of a personal God. So we have a very stark difference here between the Buddhists, who believe that by a gradual step by step process they can come to a personal understanding of Ultimate Truth, and the Christians, who live a life of faith."

Patrick: "This is Patrick speaking. You seem to be getting very deep there, rather deeper than I thought we were getting originally. You started off by asking about choices and I picked up on that word and wrote it down because it seemed that as far as I was concerned - and I suspect with Keith too, and a lot of people we know - that there really didn't seem to be much of a choice. We were born into families where the Christian faith was the faith of the family and Christian practice was the practice of the family. I suspect a lot of our listeners have not had that background and therefore do have this opportunity to choose. We grew up in families that had this sense of security which said there is a God and this God has a plan for creation and we need to find out what that plan is so that we can cooperate with it and find out what particular things he's given us to do."

Kevin: "But let's look now at the young person who today does have the choice. They can go to the library, for example, and they can pick out books on Buddhism or they can pick up books on Christianity. They can decide for themselves whether God exists or doesn't exist. Are there any compelling arguments today to become a Christian?"

Patrick: "You talk about those choices and I said we didn't have any choices, but of course as time goes by you make the choice to stay with the decision you made earlier, to look at others and say, 'No, no that doesn't speak to me of what is either the Truth, or what is helpful to me'. I guess one of the

things that Christians are often accused of is that they need a prop in life. They can't stand on their own feet. They have to have some kind of support. I'm quite happy to be accused of that. I think a lot of Christians have had experiences in life that has shown them you can't stand on your own."

Keith: "Like Patrick, I was born into a family which made certain assumptions which were basically Christian. My education was here in Brisbane, at Brisbane Grammar School mainly. I quickly came to realize that there were many, many ways to choose in life. I was fortunate enough as a young person to be exposed not just to Anglican ways of doing things, but also to various other Christian ways of doing things, and I was exposed to Buddhism, and a tiny bit of Islam, and a fair dose of Rationalism. All of those things had some sort of expression within our family circle which was pretty wide. So I suppose by the time I was twenty, I had pretty consciously sifted through - as much as a twenty year old can - the alternatives I was being offered. What I chose was something different to anything that had been put in front of me as a small child. But then, as Patrick hinted, we tend to re-assess these things as time goes on. So I've always had a very profound respect for Buddhist spirituality - it's informed my own spirituality a great deal, particularly zazen. I've also had a great respect for the Rationalist's point of view - even though I think the Rationalists point of view is very limited, I can nevertheless feel the force of it. I still come back to sitting in the Anglican expression, because for me it is the most convenient vehicle whereby I can express my spirituality."

Kevin: "Okay, let's again put ourselves in the shoes of the young person who wants to do the right thing. If they put a foot wrong now, they might go wrong for life, and this would be a terrible thing to happen. There are many, many different beliefs and clearly they can't all be right. At the very least, all but one of them must be wrong - logically. So this person who lives in fear of Hell - Hell being his conscience - wants to make the right choice. If he believes in God and there is no God, well then he has wasted his life. If he doesn't believe in God and there is a God, similarly he's in trouble - if you go by the Bible, anyway! So what can we tell this

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

young person? Does God exist? Are you certain yourselves of God's existence? Presumably, as Anglican priests, you are messengers of God. This is your job I presume, as priests, to be God's representative on Earth, or at least to be an intermediary between people and God. Are you certain yourselves that God does exist in a personal form and what reasons can you give this young person?"

Keith: "I'll let Patrick field that first. It's interesting that we were talking about some of these very things on the way in, weren't we?"

Patrick: "Well, I can say that I'm quite certain that there is a God, and I would say that to anyone who ... they have my word for it, for what that's worth. I don't think I could give you any logical argument that would prove what I'm saying. In the end, you make a leap of faith - either to have a faith or not have a faith. You make some kind of leap which you can't necessarily substantiate to another person."

Kevin: "Well, anything we do has reasons for it. If we take a leap of faith - and we take leaps everyday in all sorts of matters, even if it is just a physical leap across something in the street - but there is always a reason for us leaping. What reasons do you have for taking a leap? Is it purely because it's painful where you're standing and if you leap somewhere else it's not so painful?"

Patrick: "No, I don't think it's that. I think that for me it's a matter of commonsense. I try to understand what's going on around about me. I try to understand the universe. I try and understand what people are discovering about the universe and how it all fits together and what we're doing here. And it seems to me that it's not commonsense to believe that it's all accidental. It seems to me that it is not commonsense to believe that there isn't a 'something' behind it all and for me that "something" is God. And I want to fit in as best I can to his plan for the universe and the little bit I have to do with it."

David: "If we look at the Buddhists - the Buddhists in India or the Hindus in India - they would say that it is commonsense to believe that there is no God and that the universe and everything that we see is a result of causes. So they don't feel the need to evoke a creator God to explain everything.

They say it is commonsense that there is no God."

Patrick: "So we disagree about what commonsense is."

David: "Right. Commonsense is telling two opposite things, isn't it?"

Patrick: "Well, for them ... for me it would appear so."

David: "Yes. So how do you resolve that dilemma?"

Keith: "I don't think you do. I don't think you do resolve it. Everyone has their cultural background."

David: "So you're saying the whole thing is uncertain?"

Keith: "I'm not saying it's uncertain. I'm saying that I approach things slightly differently. I come to the same conclusion as Patrick, but I approach things from the point of experience and my experience of life. My life can be interpreted in any way I choose. If I choose to interpret it in an entirely Rationalist way then I'm forced to find an awful lot of phenomena and coincidences which are unexplained by any kind of rationality, whether it be psychological explanations or whatever. Once I choose to interpret my experience by placing something I call God into it, then it all falls into place. The experience of life is not something which is subject to rational analysis. There are so many things in our lives that aren't rational - like falling in love, like music."

Kevin: "This is called the God of the Gaps."

Keith: "No. Not at all."

Kevin: "Well, I think it is. You're saying that the things you don't understand--"

Keith: "No, no, no, no, no. The interpretation of what I see. The interpretation of my daily experience of life. How do I make sense of this? How does it all hold together?"

Kevin: "Exactly. So the things that you don't understand--"

Keith: "No, no, no. I do understand each individual phenomenon, or if I can't understand it, I can go and find a test tube and find out. There's no problem about that."

Kevin: "Well, take love. Love is not so easy to understand as an individual phenomenon."

Keith: "This is the point I'm making. How do we interpret what love is? We all experience it and we all know what it is. You know,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

you get the little kids coming along to us and they say, 'How will I know when I'm in love, Daddy?', and I say, 'Don't worry. When you are in love, you will know'. And then when they're fifteen or whatever, they say, 'I see what you mean.' It's one of those things that goes to the gut of every human being, regardless of their thought systems. I'm simply using this as one example of something that does not lend itself to rational analyses."

Kevin: "But I think it does. I think it does."

Keith: "Ah, you see, I think this is where we would disagree."

Kevin: "I can think of lots of reasons to explain the phenomenon of love."

Keith: "I don't think that any of them are adequate."

Kevin: "You haven't heard them yet."

Keith: "I've been listening to arguments to explain love for thirty or forty years."

David: "I think instead we should look at the question of whether God actually explains anything. Because, Keith, you're using the argument of God as the fundamental rational explanation of everything. Now I'd put it to you that it's actually no explanation at all, because at bottom God is some sort of 'thing', it has some sort of identity--"

Keith: "Has it? That's an assumption."

David: "But you're using it as an explanation, you see."

Keith: "I said that whatever it is that I'm calling God, I haven't given a definition to it yet. I wouldn't even try, because to me--"

Patrick: "Although, the scriptures do try to--"

Keith: "Oh, the scriptures do! Of course, they do!"

Patrick: "--by saying, before anything else there was God."

Keith: "Yeah. God is."

Patrick: "God is. That's the starting point--"

David: "But God has some sort of reality--"

Keith: "Yeah, but beyond being reality everything else is speculation, isn't it? If you're going to start describing God as being like this coffee cup, or God is like anything else, then it's speculation."

David: "Alright, but if one describes the spiritual path as, say, the process of getting to know God - in this sense, we can say that

God is *something*. It's some definite something or other, rather than something else."

Keith: "Christians - and not only Christians, but other religious people as well - will approach God in terms of personality."

David: "Okay, imagine a person who conceives of God as a horrible frothing monster who likes to eat people. Say this God created the human race in order to eat people. Now, would you say that that is a legitimate concept of God?"

Keith: "To that person it's legitimate."

David: "So in other words, God is not anything at all? It is whatever is conceived of in someone's mind?"

Keith: "No, not at all. What is reality apart from the construct that we make of it? We each construct our own realities. The sociological construction of reality is one of those profound things that goes on in every person. And you have no way of understanding my construct any more than I have of understanding your construct. So, in the end, all our reality is the creation of how we go about it. You know, reality is almost the most difficult thing in the world to describe."

Kevin: "Okay, what you're describing now is quite a popular philosophy these days. I think the New Age movement agrees with the idea that reality is what each individual perceives. But do you accept that some people are wiser than other people? For example, a person who is completely insane will have a certain vision of the world which is warped in some way or another. That's the reason we call them insane, because their view of the world is warped relative to other people's view."

Keith: "Relative to my view."

Kevin: "Do you agree that it is possible for a person to be perfectly wise or to approach being perfectly wise? Is there some such person - call him a God-Man or a Jesus-person - who sees truly what is really there and doesn't project things unnecessarily onto reality? Do you agree that such a person is possible - a person whose mind is truer than other people's minds?"

Keith: "Oh ... sorry, Patrick's bursting to say something."

Patrick: "No, I'm not bursting, I'm just ... again, I'm really saying that this is not really the direction I see us coming from. I'm a bit confused here. I see God as wanting desper-

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

ately to reveal Himself to as many people as possible. I don't see Him revealing himself as a monster - of which David talked about earlier - because one thing we would say about God is that He is love. This person you were talking about, who is wiser than everyone else, is only wiser because God has decided to reveal more to him. As we read through the scriptures there are individuals - Abraham comes immediately to mind - whom, for no good reason at all, God seemed to have chosen as the person He would reveal Himself to more fully than He had to anyone else previously."

Kevin: "So we're agreed that some people are wiser than others?"

Patrick: "Or more seeing."

Kevin: "More seeing. Same thing. So in other words, what a wise person believes to be true has more validity than--"

Patrick: "What is a wise person? What is a wise person?"

Kevin: "A wise person is a person who sees Absolute Reality, or God, perfectly. I'm not a Christian, so I don't have a conception of a personal God, but I do have a conception of Ultimate Reality and just for convenience I give this Ultimate Reality the name of God. This is not an unusual thing to do. Now, a perfectly wise person, say the Buddha--"

Patrick: "Or Jesus?"

Kevin: "I've already used the example of Jesus, so let's, just for a bit of variety--"

Keith: "Let's try Mohammed the Prophet, then."

Kevin: "Mohammed?"

Keith: "Why not?"

Kevin: "I don't think he's a good example."

Keith: "Ah! Yes, but you see, this is the problem when you start getting religious. There is an obsession of the West with Buddhism, and Hinduism, and they miss Islam."

Kevin: "For good reason."

Keith: "Ah! You see, this is a pro-cultural prejudice. They miss Islam because Islam is difficult. So instead they go to Buddhism, and Buddhism is a nice soft thing which you can sort of ... it is so different. What's wrong with us approaching Mohammed the Prophet and seeing him as a wise person?"

Kevin: "Well, I don't think he was wise."

Keith: "Yes, but that's only your personal opinion."

Kevin: "I'm pretty wise."

Keith: "Your personal opinion is of no more worth than anybody else's."

David: "Not if Kevin is wise."

Keith: "What's the problem? What's the problem? Why do Westerners have so much difficulty approaching Mohammed the Prophet?"

Kevin: "Well, I can give you some good reasons. He orchestrated an awful lot of wars, and when--"

Keith: "Oh, but so did many other people in our history! We don't have a problem approaching them."

Kevin: "Well, I do."

Keith: "This obsession with Buddhism! If we want to start approaching other ways people approach Reality, what about the Animist perception?"

Kevin: "Well, just a minute. We have to get back to the main point. You were saying--"

Patrick: "Wisdom. Wisdom."

Keith: "Wisdom. How do we judge wisdom?"

Kevin: "Just a minute, let me make this point. If I can just butt in here."

Keith: "It's your program."

Kevin: "You said before that one person's point of view - and specifically my point of view - is of equal value to everybody else's point of view. Now would you say the same thing of Jesus? If Jesus was sitting here in the room with us, would you say to him: 'Look, this stuff you're saying about God has no more value than what anybody else is saying. Your words have no more significance to those of, say, Hitler'? Would you seriously put this to him?"

Keith: "I think that when you and I sit down and talk about these things, yeah. It's a fair enough thing for me to say that one person's opinions are as good as another, because we're all talking from equal levels of ignorance. But when we're dealing with people who have what you're talking about - wisdom - well, wisdom is a very difficult word. Where do you define it? How do you know you've got it? Especially, how do you recognise it in another person? I mean, no one, I think, would dare to say that they are wise. It's a judgment made by others. It isn't one you make of yourself."

Kevin: "Ah, no, I disagree. I seriously believe I'm wise."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Keith: "Your welcome to do so. Others may disagree."

Kevin: "If other people told me I was wise, this is definitely no logical reason for me to believe that I am actually wise - just because other people might tell me that I am. David and I have recently met Zen Masters, for example, who have been ordained as Zen Masters, but in actual fact they don't themselves feel that they are qualified to be Zen Masters. And I don't feel that they're qualified to be Zen Masters either, but nonetheless they have been given the piece of paper saying that they are. This is no valid sign of wisdom."

Keith: "No, it's not really about wisdom though, is it? A Zen Master is a trainer - a spiritual trainer. He's gone through a process of training within the system - it's a system I admire, I do admire it - but within the system he has reached a point where the system says to him you may teach others. That's fair enough."

Patrick: "Can I get back to Christianity for a moment?"

Keith: "Sure."

Kevin: "Go ahead."

Patrick: "It seems to me that a fair number of the prophets have said what you have just said, Kevin, namely: 'I have no qualifications to be a prophet, but I know I am one'. And the wisdom that comes from the prophet is that he has a message from God."

David: "That's right."

Patrick: "He doesn't deserve it in any way, but he's got it."

David: "Jesus claimed that he was wise and none of the religious leaders around him took him too seriously. They actually threw rocks at him and chased him away and all the rest of it. When they asked him for his authority, he basically claimed it on his own bat."

Patrick: "No, he claimed it from his Father."

David: "Well, I could just as well claim that I am wise by my own Father."

Patrick: "The only word to be called God is Father that--"

David: "Well, I could call God, 'my Father'. So how do we distinguish the true wise man from the claimant?"

Keith: "What about what Jesus said about wisdom, 'Wisdom is authenticated by her

children'. That's a quotation. The only time he spoke or used the word wisdom. This was what he said about wisdom, that it was authenticated by her children. This surely is the great test of wisdom, isn't it? The offspring of wisdom."

David: "Alright, you're saying--"

Keith: "Look at the offspring."

David: "You're saying the actions--"

Keith: "Look at the offspring."

David: "You're saying that the actions and effects of a wise man's life is the test, or the evidence, or result of his wisdom."

Keith: "Look at the result of it. Look at the result of it."

David: "But in order to judge whether the *actions* of a wise person are actually wise, you still have to be wise yourself. In effect, it's no different to judging the wise person himself. The initial problem remains."

Keith: "I don't think one person decides if someone is wise. Keith Colbert is not going to stand up and say Joe Blow down the road is wise, and the rest of the world is going to beat a path to Joe Blow's door, are they? Wisdom is something which is discerned by a culture, by a tradition, by history. Most wise people are dead before they're recognised, aren't they?"

Kevin: "Do you seriously think that society is qualified to judge who is wise and who isn't?"

Keith: "Who else is?"

Kevin: "Surely, only the wise man is qualified. Surely!"

Keith: "The wise man knows enough to know that he doesn't know."

David: "Are you wise yourself?"

Keith: "I would never claim wisdom. Never. I seek the wisdom of others."

David: "So we can't really take seriously that point of view then."

Keith: "... I ... sorry, I got away ..."

Patrick: "We may be perceptive ..."

Keith: "Oh, we may be perceptive, but wisdom is more than mere perception, isn't it, Patrick?"

Patrick: "I'm just trying to give you an answer to it."

Keith: "Yeah, wisdom is far more than perception. I may be able to recognise wisdom when I see it."

David: "You may be able to, even though you're not wise?"

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Keith: "I may not be ... I may be able to recognise wisdom when I see it."

David: "How so?"

Keith: "That's a deep spiritual activity which I cannot again give a rational analysis of. It probably is a combination of wisdom being ... it's resonate. Resinous, isn't it? Resinous."

David: "Okay, let me put it this way. I define wisdom as a very extreme position - you're either totally wise or you're totally ignorant. God is something that you know totally, or not at all. So you can't be partially wise."

Keith: "No shades of grey?"

David: "No. Not in this matter. God is something that you know perfectly well or not. And only someone who understands God perfectly well, and who therefore has the authority of God, can actually make a judgment upon anybody else who claims wisdom."

Kevin: "I think the reason why knowledge of Ultimate things is either all or nothing is because God or Ultimate Reality is an absolute. Here's an illustration: a drop of water is never partly boiling - it's either in one state or another state. And so it's the same with knowledge of ultimate things. Either there is knowledge of it or there is no knowledge of it. You can't be half-way. Does this make any sense to you?"

Keith: "This touches on what I saying at the beginning as to why I live a life of faith. It is the way I interpret the experiences in my life. You know, I can resonate with what you're saying there. Whether I can actually articulate it all is another question, isn't it? It's an absolute knowledge within myself. I may be quite dumb in being able to explain it to you, but I *know* it."

Kevin: "You're talking more of an intuitive knowledge here."

Keith: "Hmm. Yeah."

Kevin: "Is this reliable? I mean, some statements by Jesus occur to my mind just now - things like: 'Do not think I came to Earth to bring peace, for I came with a sword to separate one man from another. A man's enemies shall be the members of his own family. A son will hate his own father--'"

Keith: "That's an observation of reality."

Patrick: "This proved to be right."

Keith: "This proved to be right. But that's just the way life is."

Kevin: "But if the ordinary person goes on their gut feelings and intuitions, and they meet this man who's coming out with this pure venom--"

Patrick: "I'm not sure if it was venom or whether it was reality. This is how it's going to be if you decide to take the path I'm leading on. Everyone will think you're foolish. Your parents will disown you, your wife will divorce you, and that's what I've come to do to you."

Keith: "I mean, look at what happened to Jesus right in Mark's Gospel there. There's a story about how Jesus is doing some things in a house and a message comes in, 'Your family's outside', and Jesus's mother and his brothers and his sisters are all outside, and they're saying, 'Come on home. You're embarrassing us. They all say you're mad'. Jesus had the same rejection within his own family as he's talking about to other people. So what's surprising about it? It's just there."

David: "Is this the spiritual path that you're describing? Anyone who travels along the spiritual path faces this rejection by--"

Keith: "Yes, everyone does. It doesn't matter what tradition you're in, either. You can be in any tradition and anyone who walks in the spiritual path finds this rejection by people who do not consider that that is an appropriate way to behave."

David: "Yes, but we're living in a world where there is close to a billion Christians."

Keith: "Hmm, yeah."

David: "So, someone who travels the Christian path won't find much rejection, will he? Instead, he'll find a billion soul mates!"

Patrick: "Oh yes, it can be very comfortable in countries such as this."

Keith: "Yeah. It can be."

Patrick: "It can be comfortable to be a Christian if you only move around in Christian circles and don't allow yourself to go on a program like this."

Keith: "Oh, yeah."

Patrick: "There are many parts of the world where Christians are under threat of martyrdom--"

Keith: "Like the Gold Coast. It's easy to isolate yourself in a like-minded community and have a comfortable life."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Patrick: "And that's a real danger for us, I think."

Keith: "It's a danger for everybody, but it's easy to do that. But it's not hard to find a community of people that are nothing like you."

Kevin: "But what I was trying to illustrate, though, was the unreliability of the intuitions or the gut feelings. There are so many things that Jesus did which the people of today - and Christians especially - would be totally repulsed by."

Patrick: "I'm not sure that's true."

Keith: "No, neither am I."

Kevin: "Not only his statement: 'I came to set fire upon the Earth and how I wish it were already kindled', the fact that of his twelve representatives - his main representatives that he chose - not a single woman was chosen among them. I mean, this is very politically incorrect!"

Keith: "So what?"

Kevin: "Well!"

Keith: "Political correctness is the invention of the late twentieth century. I don't see the relevance."

Kevin: "Well, I mean, if people go on their gut feelings, what are the feminists going to think of Jesus?"

Keith: "I don't give a damn what the feminists think of Jesus, frankly. It's totally irrelevant."

Kevin: "Are either of you married?"

Patrick: "Both of us are."

Keith: "Yeah, both of us are. And both of us have daughters."

Patrick: "When you're quoting Jesus, you are in fact quoting people who are quoting Jesus."

Kevin: "True."

Patrick: "You're quoting men of the first century, who were probably politically correct as things were in the first century. And I would think that as St Mark and St Luke and people like that were hoping to get anyone to read their books, they wouldn't have said anything so revolutionary as to say that Jesus chose Mary Magdalene or one or two of the--"

Keith: "Or Mary the Might of Cuzor."

Patrick: "They're actually mentioned as being around."

Keith: "I mean, the people at the foot of the cross are women."

Patrick: "Yes, and the first person who saw Jesus after his resurrection was a woman."

Kevin: "I tell you what--"

Patrick: "They dare to tell people that."

Kevin: "We'll have a short musical interlude and we'll come back with the subject of women."

[MUSIC BREAK]

Kevin: "Okay, back to the subject of women. I can see you're dying to talk about it. Now, both of you are married?"

Keith: "Yep. Both got daughters."

Kevin: "Yeah, yeah. Now, firstly, I was brought up with the impression that to live a good Christian life involved being a single man. Particularly, I'm thinking of Paul's advice where he said: 'How I wish you could be single like me'."

Patrick: "Did he say that?"

Kevin: "Well, words very close to these. He said: 'If the burning is too great - if the pain is too great - then you should marry, for it's better to marry than to burn'."

Keith: "He said that to women, actually."

Kevin: "Whatever."

Keith: "Young widows."

Kevin: "Whatever. Obviously, the message is - and it seems commonsense to me, being a wise man - that marriage should definitely be a last resort of the spiritual person. Have you given this any thought? Obviously, you don't agree with it. You don't? I can see some shaking heads."

Keith: "I can feel the force of the argument. I suppose in ... Patrick, you speak. I come from my own life experience of having very seriously considered the monastic life and chosen to be a married person. So there was a very serious consideration. Celibate life was a very serious consideration to me. I feel the force of the argument."

Kevin: "I put it to you that it is impossible to love God, or Ultimate Reality, *and* to love a woman - in the human sense - at the same time. You can't have two Masters, because you'll love one and hate the other. This is a biblical teaching, but it's also commonsense. You can't have two Masters. Either you love God totally, 100%, with your whole life - or nothing."

Patrick: "I think you love God through your life. I think to say that I'm going to dedicate myself absolutely, and 100% of my

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

time, to the pursuit of my love affair with God, to the exception of all other things, is not to live a godly life. I think God places us in this world, and marriage has been around for a very long time - if not marriage, then certainly relationships with family have been around for a very long time - and I believe that I express myself as a child of God, and as a Christian, perhaps best of all in my relationships with my wife, with my children, with my congregation, and with my friends."

Kevin: "But, surely, the demand to live an absolute life - as a complete sacrifice to Truth - surely we have to love all people - and I'm not talking about love in the human sense now, I'm talking about a far loftier form of love - we have to love all people and all things equally. Now, it's definitely not the case in a marriage situation that you love all women. Certainly, spiritual love is very limited in a normal human marriage. It's impossible to give free love to the whole world when you're in a married situation. It's definitely a barrier."

Keith: "I don't agree. You're hinting that somehow or other that there's a tie up between sexuality and the ability to have a sexual expression with someone."

Kevin: "I'm thinking more in terms of emotional desire."

Keith: "Well, I mean, whether it's a consummated sexuality, or whether it just something that goes on in your pornographic little mind, it really doesn't matter, does it? You're hinting, though, that there has to be some sort of sexuality in it."

Kevin: "No, no. Emotional desire, that's all."

Keith: "If you're saying that you can't love women ... most men, who aren't gay, have the same inhibition applied to them in their relationship with other men. But this is not because they're married to another man. It is simply because there are societal taboos. Are you suggesting that it's not possible for man to love other men?"

David: "I think what Kevin is saying is that love of anything at all hinders love of God."

Kevin: "Emotional human love."

David: "Yeah."

Keith: "This is an ancient heresy. It's been around since the beginning of Christianity. Was it the Remanices, was it? Remanicism? Augustan of Hippo had to deal with this thing

and he was very attracted to it himself. And people took the view that you had to be totally disassociated from the material world. That the material world was evil and destroyed your relationship with God. It's a heresy which pops up not only in Christianity, but also in other forms too. It's always a heresy because if we - and we're assuming the existence of God for the purpose of this discussion - if there is a God who has a relationship with His created universe, then how on earth can we say that that which God created, or is responsible for, is evil?"

Kevin: "Okay, I'll tell you. The problem with emotions - all emotional desires - is that they're based on a basic misinterpretation of reality. Whenever there is an emotional desire, it comes from a feeling of a 'self' or an 'I' that believes that it is lacking something - it's lacking love, it's lacking warmth, it's lacking approval. These are the normal human feelings that people have which come out of their ignorance. If people knew what their self really was, then they wouldn't have these feelings of lacking. I put it to you that all the emotional desires and loves are themselves taking us away from the material world. They're taking us away from the real world as it is. So I put it to you that everyone in the world today, living with all their desires and loves - just normal human life - is actually running away from the real world. All the religions are doing the same thing."

Keith: "Jesus talks about forgetting yourself. I don't hear Jesus talking about--"

David: "He talks about giving up one's life."

Keith: "Yes. Those who would wish to have their life must be prepared to surrender it. In various ways."

Patrick: "Don't you do that in a love relationship?"

Keith: "Of course."

Patrick: "You surrender, you give, you forget yourself."

Keith: "A love relationship which is based upon what you're going to give me isn't a love relationship. That's seeking gratification, isn't it?"

David: "You're suggesting that there can exist some sort of unconditional love between two people."

Keith: "Yes."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Patrick: "I would like to think that that's the ideal - not just in a marriage relationship but in all relationships. I'm there to give something I've got to you."

Keith: "Loving is something you give. It's not something you get. Something that you are offering ... even if it's just your response."

Kevin: "It's a feeling, isn't it? Love is a feeling."

Keith: "No, not necessarily. Love can be an act of the will. Something I decide to do."

Kevin: "But when we feel ... you know you were saying how--"

Keith: "Are we talking about Agape? Or are we talking about Eros? What sort of love are we talking about?"

Kevin: "Agape. Infinite love. This is the only true love. All the other loves are based on the idea of the finite world, the limited world. There's only one spiritual love, and all the other loves are opposed to it. They're incompatibly opposed to it."

Keith: "Oh, no ..."

Patrick: "No, I don't know about that. You're suggesting that our lives are opposed to what God's will is. I mean, God has put us here and I believe He's given us the emotions. And within the limitations of our present life, our expressions of love are expressions of who we are here and now."

David: "Alright, when you look at some of Jesus' sayings, he was urging us to give up everything we hold dear. He said somewhere along the line there: 'What is most valued among men is detestable in God's sight'. And what is most valued among men is love. You see?"

Patrick: "Did he say that? Or are you just assuming? I don't think he said that."

Kevin: "It's in the New Testament somewhere."

David: "Yes."

Patrick: "Ah ha!"

Kevin: "But not only that, he would tell his disciples: 'If you want to be my disciple you have to give up everything you have, everything that gives you belonging, an identity, everything--'"

Keith: "That's not what he said, of course. That's just an interpretation of what he said."

David: "Well, everything you hold dear."

Kevin: "Everything you love."

Keith: "No, again, that's not what he said."

David: "We must have different New Testaments, I tell you. What about hating your mother and father? 'Whoever does not hate his mother and father, brothers, sisters, wives, or even himself, cannot be my disciple'."

Keith: "Your running into all sorts of problems with translation, aren't you?"

David: "Yeah, but ..."

Keith: "The word 'hate', which is written in Greek--"

David: "Alright, but the--"

Keith: "Hang on. You see, this is the problem. It is a serious problem when you start fiddling about with an English translation from a Greek Bible which was recording something said in Aramaic."

David: "Yes, but there are dozens of these sayings."

Keith: "I know. I know."

David: "And they all point to this one thing. He was asked what is the greatest commandment, and he said that it was to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind--"

Keith: "And the second was to love your neighbour as yourself!"

David: "Well, alright, but we are talking about the first one."

Keith: "Yes, but don't forget he said the second one."

Patrick: "There's not even a comma."

Keith: "There's not even a comma there."

Patrick: "There's no full stop, it just goes straight through."

Keith: "The question was, 'What must I do to be saved?' The answer was, 'Love the Lord your God and love your neighbour as yourself'. He didn't make a distinction. On another occasion Jesus said, 'Love your enemies'."

David: "Okay, let me give you my view of the situation. As I see it, Jesus did urge us to give up everything we hold dear for God. He did stress this."

Patrick: "I would say more 'hang loose' to everything we hold dear, not to rely on it, not to build your lives around it, be prepared to give it up if necessary. I don't think he really encouraged everybody necessarily to go rushing off into the desert and tear off their clothes and live a sort of hermit life, like John the Baptist. That wasn't what he was saying."

David: "He was pointing with urgency. *Urgency*. He was saying that--"

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Patrick: "Urgency. Can we say something about urgency and the New Testament? We started to talk about Paul earlier on. We have to remember that Paul lived in an age when there was an expectation that tomorrow was the end of the world."

Kevin: "Right now is The Hour of Judgment!"

Patrick: "Oh, it is. And they didn't have two thousand years of waiting for it to sort of cool them down a bit. So sometimes, perhaps, some of the things they said were a bit ... wild."

Keith: "Over the top."

Patrick: "Over the top."

Kevin: "Well, no. Every moment that each one of us lives could be the last moment of our life, so there is a definite urgency involved."

Patrick: "Oh, we do know that, yes. But if we really believe the world is going to end tomorrow, what's the point of getting married? Or having families? Or bringing children into the world? Or buying a house, or paying a mortgage? All that sort of thing."

Kevin: "Well, you were saying before how it was God which gave us all these emotional attachments that we have - and presumably all the evil in the world comes from God as well - so why do you think we should preserve all of the marriages in the world, which can cause so much suffering to people? For example, you're married to one woman. Presumably, before you married her, this woman had other admirers. I'm just making something up here. Some of these admirers may have gone through an extreme amount of pain when the two of you got married. Their pain comes from their love of the woman. Their love never becomes fulfilled, for example, so they go through hell - maybe for the rest of their lives. So there's so much pain and suffering and hell that comes from human love."

Patrick: "That hasn't been my experience, nor any I've ever heard of - outside certain novels."

Kevin: "Well, jealousy is very common, isn't it?"

Patrick: "Oh well, it is certainly common on the television screen, but I don't know if *that* kind of jealousy happens in the real world."

Kevin: "You're not serious?"

Patrick: "Maybe I've led a very sheltered life. I haven't been aware of people who come and talk to one about their lives, and their problems, and the way the cards are stacked against them. They're constantly telling me that they're living in pain - not from being jilted - but from no one responding to them."

Kevin: "No, jealousy is a very definite human emotion."

Patrick: "We're not getting support from Keith, so he must ..."

Keith: "It's the stuff of Barbara Cartland novels, I know, but the real world's a little different."

Patrick: "I know I'm very lucky to have got the wife I did, and there was probably a lot of other fellows who would have liked to ..."

Kevin: "I'm sure."

Patrick: "I'm not sure ... I'm not sure they were really breaking their hearts."

Kevin: "Well, you don't know this. People have been known to kill themselves over this sort of thing."

Keith: "Ah, yes, ... uhm ..."

Kevin: "So, I would put it to you, that this emotional, human love comes from the Devil. By the word 'Devil', I mean ignorance. There is no other evil, or Devil, than ignorance itself. So all of these things which are associated with pain and suffering, they're not good, they're not spiritual. They're not associated with spirituality. They can't be. Bad fruit doesn't come from a good tree. Jealousy and pain and separation - the pain of separation when your wife dies ..."

Keith: "What are you saying there when you talk about love? Are you talking about this Agape love that we mentioned before?"

Kevin: "I'm talking about the feeling of love. The *feeling* of love."

Keith: "Yeah, yeah, but we're talking about love. Are we talking about this Agape love that we were talking about before? This thing we give?"

Kevin: "No. I'm talking about human love."

Keith: "Or are we talking about the desire to possess? Now, a lot of what people masquerade as love is, in fact, the desire to possess."

Kevin: "Well, I'm talking about the feeling of love."

Keith: "Yeah, but you see--"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "Just that. That's all."

Keith: "Yeah, but you see--"

Kevin: "The good feeling. The good feeling of love."

Keith: "Yes, but this emotion thing isn't love itself, it's a symptom, isn't it? And it can, in some circumstances, with some people, lead them to desire possessing the object, whether it be a person or a thing. Now, this desire to possess and control creates all those evils you were talking about - and that is what was pointed out by Jesus as being undesirable."

David: "Are you saying that a lot of marriages out there don't have this possessive element?"

Keith: "I think a lot of people in their marriages have a desire to control and possess their partner."

David: "But a lot don't?"

Keith: "A lot don't. They have successful marriages."

David: "So if their partner died, they wouldn't grieve at all in the slightest degree?"

Keith: "I've seen people who've been quite capable of letting go of their marriage partners."

David: "No grief. I mean, *no grief*. If there is truly no possession at all, then there must be no grief in the slightest degree. It would be just like watching a cloud disappear."

Keith: "All these things are along the continuum. And what is grief? Grief is frequently--"

David: "The suffering of a loss."

Keith: "The loss of something which you hold dear."

David: "Yes, that's right. So that's a possession."

Keith: "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no."

David: "Yes."

Keith: "You don't necessarily have to possess something you hold dear. It's just something which you value."

David: "Well, you can only lose what you possess."

Keith: "No, no, no. We're not losing it."

David: "We're having a real difficult time here tonight!"

Keith: "We're using the word 'loss' in different ways."

David: "I'm using it in a very, very basic sense. Very, very basic. I mean, you can't lose something you don't possess."

Keith: "Okay. The absence of something which you value. Okay, if you want to avoid the word 'loss'. The absence of something which you value can cause a great deep sense of grief and sense of loss. I'm sure Patrick knows plenty of people who've - and they're mostly women - plenty of people who--"

Kevin: "Don't love their husbands."

Keith: "--have lost their husbands twenty years ago and have lived on quite successfully. There is a sense of loss - there is a sorrow from the fact that the person that they valued enormously is not with them. It's not the reason for abandoning life."

Kevin: "Therefore, the pain is intimately associated with the love."

Keith: "Of course. If you're going to love, you have to be prepared to accept pain. And if you're not prepared to accept pain, you're not prepared to love."

Kevin: "Look at all the bad things come out of pain. Again, I go back to what I said before--"

Keith: "What about the good things that come out of pain?"

Kevin: "Bad fruit doesn't--"

Keith: "What about the good things that come out of pain?"

Kevin: "--come from a good tree."

Keith: "What about the good things that come out of pain? The knowledge that your appendix is falling apart and is going to kill you is given to you by pain. Without pain you will not know that there's something wrong in the state of Denmark."

Kevin: "Okay, but there's a difference between physical bodily pain and emotional pain. For example, if I'm burnt by a fire, I get a pain which tells me to pull my hand away from the fire. This is hard-wired into us, if you like. It's part of what we are physically and materially. But the emotional pain is not something we necessarily have to experience. If we don't experience human love, if we don't experience this need, then we never experience the pain."

Keith: "Yeah, but if you never experience the pain of rejection, you never discover what a bastard you are, do you?"

Kevin: "Well, if you are a bastard in the first place--"

Keith: "Yes. If you are, you're going to have to experience the pain before you discover something about yourself."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "Well, this is in the case of a person who is not perfect - who is an ordinary, ignorant person. If a person cruises through life without experiencing pain, they're never going to learn anything, it's true."

Keith: "That's right."

Kevin: "So there is a positive side to pain. But the pain itself comes from ignorance, and the pain itself is also the motivating factor for an awful lot of evil that goes on in the world."

David: "Yes, and we are talking about *the spiritual path*. You two are suggesting that love - in whatever form - is part of the spiritual path, of the highest life there is. We're suggesting that that's not the case. Because all love is ultimately based on the self - love is a selfish thing."

Patrick: "We're saying it isn't. We're starting from a God who gives. We say God is love, and God gives, and God so loved His creation that He gave His only begotten Son, knowing that His only begotten Son would go to a cross - and this was built into that pain, it was all part of the love."

Kevin: "But you're interpreting that love now as a human love, and not a spiritual love."

Patrick: "We're saying that there is a pattern of love that God has shown us, and we, as God's children, would want to try to be like him, if we could."

Kevin: "Well, by saying God is love, do you interpret this to mean God is the love that is between husband and wife, or is this love far higher, more lofty?"

David: "Or completely different?"

Kevin: "A completely different form of love?"

Patrick: "I think in the relationship between man and wife - and in the relationship of love in other spheres too - we're reaching out towards that greater love. We are really wanting to have a relationship with God Himself. He gives us a sort of a glimpse of it through our ordinary relationships."

David: "Now, again, you two are not claiming wisdom yourself, are you? You're not saying that you are totally wise."

Patrick: "We're saying that we have a faith in this God, and this is what we believe about Him."

David: "Well, wouldn't it be better, don't you think, to make an all out concerted effort

to become wise? To me, it would be dogmatic to assume that wisdom is impossible to a human being. So, our first priority is to actually become wise and then, and only then, can one make judgments about whether love is good or bad."

Patrick: "I'm concerned about how you measure this wisdom, and how you know you're wise. You say you're wise, Kevin. How do you know you're wise? What is the measurement? How do you know that you are and I'm not? I'm going back to that old subject again."

Kevin: "Reason is the only measuring stick. There is no other measuring stick than reason. That is the answer."

Keith: "That's a terribly Renaissance Western European answer to a question which is asked by cultures everywhere. Reason is a nonsense to people in other cultures. They look at it and laugh."

Kevin: "It's a nonsense to people in our culture as well."

Keith: "Yeah, see, what do you call reason? I mean, it is honestly - this is my Rationalist background coming to the fore here - it honestly is almost impossible to describe."

David: "Well, I'll describe it as the burning desire for Truth."

Keith: "What is Truth?"

David: "Knowledge of Ultimate Reality."

Keith: "When do you know you've got Truth? Pontius Pilot asked Jesus that question, didn't he? 'What is Truth?' And Jesus didn't say anything."

David: "Yes, but if Jesus could become wise and understand the Truth--"

Keith: "And he didn't. He didn't. If he was wise - and I'm assuming for a moment that he was wise - he was wise enough not to answer the question."

Kevin: "Not answering it is a form of answer."

Keith: "Well, when you remain silent in the face of a question, you're throwing it back to the questioner to validate to themselves the question."

Kevin: "It is also an answer."

David: "Yes, it communicates something."

Keith: "It communicates something more about the validity of the question."

David: "Alright. Thanks, we'll have to leave it there. Thanks to Reverend Keith Colbert and Reverend Patrick Doulin. They

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

were parish priests from the Anglican Church.”

Kevin: “And still are.”

David: “And still are.”

Keith: “At least until the Archbishop hears all this tomorrow!”

David: “If you want to make any comments or write to us - to either Kevin or my-

self - you can write to this address, it's P.O. Box 207, St Lucia, 4067. That's P.O. Box 207, St Lucia, 4067. Kevin and I will be back next week, where we'll be talking to physicists about the philosophical implications of physics. Until then, we'll see you next week.”⁵¹

THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY

- A conversation on *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -
Copyright (c) 1995 Kevin Solway & David Quinn
6th August, 1995*

Guests:

- Roselyn Stone - Authorized Zen Master
- Greg Howard - Zen teacher at The Everyday Zen Group

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

Introduction

A couple of years ago Kevin and I attended a talk given by Zen Master Roselyn Stone entitled, "The Sound of One Woman Sitting". After spending considerable time describing her favourite sitting places in Asia, she finally got onto the subject of her qualifications. Yes, she assured us, her Master had confirmed her enlightenment and had certified her, thereby giving her the authority to teach others. And yet what I find most curious is that for some unknown reason her Master, while he gave her the authority to teach, denied her the authority to go on and confirm the enlightenment of others. Work that out if you will!

The following conversation therefore explores the question of authority. How does an individual know they are enlightened or wise? Can we ascertain our own wisdom for ourselves, or do we have to rely on an authorized teacher to do it? And if the latter is the case, then how did the teacher ascertain their own enlightenment? Did the Buddha have to rely on someone else to authorize him as wise? Here we go right to the heart of what is meant by being an individual. Can there truly exist an individual, a person who is an authority unto himself?

Before the show, Roselyn was warning Kevin about some of the traditions of Zen. She described how a student would be having an interview with a Zen Master, which would

be abruptly terminated when the Master rang a little bell by his side. Even if the student was in mid-speech, the moment the bell rang he would have to stop, bow and leave the room immediately. Kevin, in his compassion, reassured her that we wouldn't do that to her.

The moment the program ended Roselyn and Greg were immediately absorbed in a frenetic exchange of news about magazines, newsletters, people, and all the latest happenings of their lives - all of which they liked to call "Zen Gossip".

Kevin and I would have been either bewildered or disgusted had we not known what to expect.

D. Q

Kevin: "Welcome to *The Hour of Judgment*. We believe this to be the world's most intelligent program. I'm Kevin Solway, introducing the program just for a change, but my fellow sage, David Quinn, is right here in the studio with me, and together with our two guests this evening we'll be talking about the path to Ultimate Reality. Now, Greg Howard is the teacher at the Everyday Zen group here in Brisbane, and we also have Roselyn Stone, who's an Authorized Zen Master of the Sai-un An tradition - is that right? You'd better tell me."

Roselyn said that her teaching name was Sai-un An and that Sambokyn was the tradition.

Kevin: "And you're at the Mountain Moon Sangha in Brisbane, but you hail from Toronto."

Roselyn said that there was also a Mountain Moon Sangha in Toronto.

* **Please note:** This text is *not* a direct transcript from the radio program. It is possible that Roselyn Stone and Greg Howard may have some claim to the copyright of the words they spoke on our radio program - the law is unclear in this regard. Neither Roselyn nor Greg have consented to our using such a direct transcript of their words here, so we have related the conversation in our own words to the best of our ability.

Both Roselyn Stone and Greg Howard would like it to be made very clear that they do not in any way support our activities.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "Okay, that's the introductions out of the way. Oh, you also used to be a professor of phenomenology ..."

Roselyn agreed with this and said that in Australia it is called "human movement". She said that she studied the phenomenology of sport and dance.

Kevin: "Right. This is just to give us an idea of your background. And you, Greg, work at the Conservatorium of Music."

Greg said that he did and added that he was an "ethnomusicologist", which meant that he was interested in music from traditions other than the mainstream Western tradition.

Kevin: "Okay, well, tonight we're talking about a very serious subject, the subject of Zen, which I believe is probably the most difficult and most profound wisdom in the Universe. And we're very fortunate this evening to actually have an Authorized Zen Master in the studio with us. Roselyn, would you agree with my description of Zen as being the most profound and difficult wisdom in the world? And could you give us some explanation of what it means to be a Zen Master. Does it mean being a teacher - or what does it mean?"

Roselyn answered this by saying that one becomes a Zen Master when one's own Zen master authorizes one. That Zen Master was similarly authorized by his own Master, and so it goes back down the line. As to the question of whether Zen is the most profound and most difficult wisdom, Roselyn said that it was certainly the deepest. "But", she went on, "I have also said that it is the easiest path and that's what makes it so hard."

Kevin: "Okay, let's concentrate more on the Zen Master angle. Presumably, in the normal English language the word 'master' means someone who has excelled or mastered a particular subject. Your teacher has obviously authorized you as a Zen Master, does this mean in your own mind that you have mastered this subject?"

Roselyn answered in the negative.

Kevin: "So, what does--"

Roselyn went on to say that the practise of Zen was never-ending. She said that even Shakayamuni (the Buddha) was still practicing.

Kevin: "But certainly when you get to a certain stage of understanding, or a certain

stage of enlightenment, when you are qualified to speak about Ultimate Reality, and feel qualified to judge the level of understanding of other people, surely the title of 'Master' would be appropriate. Do you feel you have reached this level? - from your own mind now, rather than from the mind of your teacher."

Roselyn thought that she has reached a level which allowed her to make judgments about certain things and about people who were a little behind her on the path. She said that if she didn't think this, she would not be in Australia leading a Zen group.

David: "Have you reached certainty of knowledge though, Roselyn? I mean, have you experienced full enlightenment, like the enlightenment of the Buddha? When he was--"

Roselyn questioned David's use of the term "enlightenment".

David: "Like that of the Buddha, who gained a great breakthrough under the Bodhi tree, and who realised the essence of everything. Is this your wisdom, the ultimate understanding of everything?"

Roselyn made use of an analogy. She likened enlightenment or "realization" to a scratch in a window that was covered in soot. Before one is enlightened, one cannot see through the window at all, but after a good deal of practice a scratch is finally made. With more practice, the scratch becomes bigger and eventually the whole window is clean. Roselyn placed herself "a little beyond a scratch", but reckoned that the "substance" of what she had realized was the same as Shakayamuni's. She concluded by saying that the depth and the clarity of her realization had to be worked on and she still made practices to that end.

Kevin: "I take it that you mean the degree to which one's understanding infiltrates throughout the whole of one's life and throughout the whole of one's mind? Because I've met many people who have had some kind of what they would probably call a 'religious experience', but they come out of it essentially no different to the way they were before. They continue with their normal lives, which on the whole are very dishonest lives - playing games, playing roles, wearing the fashions of the day, the sexual games, the whole thing. So even though they would

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

believe deep down in their own minds that there's been some kind of breakthrough, it doesn't really change the way that they live in their normal everyday lives. Any understanding of reality, of the real nature of the existence of things, doesn't manifest itself in their lives. So, would you consider this to be a case of a 'scratch' having been made?"

Roselyn answered in the negative. She said that there were two important things to be realized at this point. The first was that "Zen done without a teacher is not Zen." With a teacher you had someone to whom you could present yourself for regular guidance and/or examination. She went on to say that many people do have "experiences", but these were often "Makyo" or devilish experiences.

Kevin: "These are altered states of consciousness aren't they."

Roselyn agreed, but said that they were not the breakthrough into true realization. She stressed that this was where a teacher became critical, because there were many people wandering around thinking that they were enlightened, when they weren't.

Kevin: "The statement you made before was interesting, the statement that 'Zen without a teacher is not Zen'. Now I have personally been practicing Zen for about twenty years, and I have never had a teacher - not a living teacher at least. To tell the truth, I've never met anyone who impressed me as a human being. I've never really met anyone who I thought knew more than I did - and I've been to many different teachers, from different religious traditions. So I've never had a teacher, but I do have my own mind, and ultimately the only teacher anyone can ever have, whether they have a physical teacher or not, is their own mind. Because even if you have a physical teacher who tells you to do twenty hours of sitting meditation, at bottom your own mind has to tell you whether you're going to do what this teacher tells you or not."

Roselyn asked Kevin what he meant by "own mind".

Kevin: "I'm just speaking in everyday terms."

Roselyn repeated her question: what did Kevin mean by "own mind"?

Kevin: "Well, I know what it is and you know what it is."

Roselyn asked the same question a third time. She added that this was a question Bussui asked a long time ago.

Kevin: "You don't know what your own mind is?"

Roselyn deflected the question back and asked Kevin if he knew his own mind.

Kevin: "I do, yes."

Roselyn greeted this with sarcasm and asked him if that was the case then where was it?

Kevin: "It's wherever I say it is."

Once again, Roselyn greeted Kevin's answer with sarcasm. She then asked the initial question a fourth time. "What is this own mind that tells you, "Oh, yeah, maybe I'll do what my teacher told me to do or maybe I won't?" What is this own mind?"

Kevin: "Whatever appears to you as your own mind is your own mind."

Roselyn remarked that it sounded to her a lot like ego."

Kevin: "People who have an ego live from their own ego - there's no doubt about that. But people who don't have an ego still have a mind, they just don't have an ego."

Roselyn said that she would question such a statement.

Kevin: "Okay, you're welcome. Nonetheless, the point still stands, that whether we have a teacher telling us what to do or not, we decide for ourselves whether to follow the teacher or not. So, the ultimate teacher of everything we do - the ultimate guru - is our own self. This bypasses the external teacher."

Roselyn objected to this, saying that Kevin and herself held different assumptions and were arguing from different points of view.

David: "Well, we're talking about making decisions, so you could say that is an act of mind - making a decision or a choice."

Roselyn explained that it was certainly true that there had to be a feeling of trust and confidence in the teacher before one could enter into a relationship with him or her. But although one had to be willing to be guided by the teacher, the guidance centred around the practice of Zen and not on being told specifically what to do.

David: "Well, I'm talking about something deeper and broader, about making a decision about how to live. Now, the choice of whether to adopt a teacher or whether to adopt one's

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

own mind is an act of will. It's a choice based on experience."

Roselyn agreed.

David: "The processes are identical in both cases. In fact, what Kevin was saying is that the process of mind, one's reasoning mind, one's conscious decision--"

Roselyn objected by saying that it entailed more than the use of the reasoning mind - intuition, for example.

Kevin: "If you follow your intuition it is only because reason tells you to do so."

Roselyn disagreed with this.

Kevin: "Everyone has gut feelings all the time, to some degree, and we choose whether to act on them or not."

Roselyn allowed that conscience played a part. Greg broke in and said that it wasn't reasoning that was taking place there but merely a conditioned response. He admitted that thoughts were involved in the conditioned response but mainly it was habit. People were always reacting to the environment around them by way of this deep level of conditioning, and this was what was called the ego.

Kevin: "Okay, let's say we meet a teacher, for example - I'm just trying to imagine a young person today trying to find the right way to live and they meet a teacher who claims to be a Zen Master. Now let's say that their deep inner voice, their conditioning, tells them that this person has something to tell them. They're fairly convinced this person is wiser and more experienced than themselves, and following their gut feeling, their conditioning, they decide to follow this teacher. Now, they've still made a decision. It doesn't matter where this decision comes from, because ultimately it's been their own mind that's decided. The point is that every person is ultimately individually responsible for themselves. 'Themselves' are their own guru. An external guru is no different to a book. A book can tell me to do something, but I don't have to do it."

Greg partially agreed with this. He said that the original Buddha taught us not to accept anything on authority, but to establish the truth of Buddhism from our own experience. But the Buddha didn't say that we should confine this simply to our "rational experience", but to experience it more deeply. While the experience of Zen did involve an

intellectual element, its true import involved something else entirely.

Kevin: "So, do you agree with me that it is possible to practise Zen without having an external, physical teacher? Or, do you agree with Roselyn that Zen means an external, physical teacher?"

Greg replied that this was a very difficult question to answer and he wasn't even sure that he was qualified to answer it. He explained that he couldn't really share Roselyn's point of view because, after all, he was merely a student who had only begun the process of teaching.

Kevin: "And yet you have been qualified to teach!"

Greg explained that he was merely beginning an apprenticeship. "The practice of teaching has been given to me as a practice", he said. He reckoned that he was learning just as much as his students from the experience, as it gave him many opportunities to reflect on how his life and experience was really no different to theirs. In this way, he saw himself as "a student who teaches". He concluded by saying that this was invariably different to Roselyn's position, even though she probably experienced much the same thing.

Roselyn concurred with these sentiments and added that the best practice she experienced was when she sat in the Dosang room and interacted with her students. She claimed that she was dumbfounded by the way this deepened her own practice of Zen and was deeply grateful for the opportunity.

David: "Actually, going back to the point of whether it's possible to achieve enlightenment without a teacher, obviously--"

Roselyn broke in exclaiming that "Oh, sure, people do it! People do it!" But she went on to say that without a teacher one doesn't know that one has achieved enlightenment. It is possible, she said, for a person to have achieved enlightenment, but not know it.

David: "How do you think one ascertains it then? I mean--"

Roselyn replied with a quote: "There are questions that can be asked, and there are things that can be looked at."

David: "You've been suggesting that only a teacher or a Master can ascertain your own realization and that you can't ascertain your own realization for yourself. It requires--"

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Roselyn broke in and said that based on her experience and that of her colleagues and students, and of stories that she had heard, it was rare for someone to know that they are enlightened with deep certainty. Many people had wonderful experiences, but they turn out to be shallow experiences because there has been no change in their lives. Other people had a sense of "something just turned over", nothing else, and yet it was a true experience. She said that she once heard a couple of experiences sent in by people to a radio program which made her wish that she could hear them in the Dosang room.

Kevin: "I think we'll concentrate on this subject of how a person ascertains enlightenment. It is obvious to me that if a person is enlightened then they would know it. I'm talking about real enlightenment now - not just a scratch--"

Roselyn reluctantly agreed that Shakymuni probably knew he was enlightened.

Kevin: "I'm thinking of another example - Bankei. I think that's how you pronounce his name?"

Roselyn provided the correct pronunciation.

Kevin: "I remember his story - not the exact details - but when he was about nineteen, he knew himself to be enlightened. And he thought: 'Well, I want to be a teacher. I want to go out and teach, so I'd better go and get some other teacher to tell me what I already know - just so other people will believe me. They'll think that I'm bonkers if I just go out and tell them I'm enlightened'. So he travelled all over Japan. He started by visiting a nearby Zen Master and he realized that the fellow was not qualified to recognize his enlightenment and pass him as a Zen Master. He would ask revered teachers who they would recommend as the wisest Zen Master in the whole of Japan, and he would travel long distances to meet them, only to find that they too were not qualified to pass him as a Zen Master. He went all over Japan trying to find someone of genuine insight. Eventually, he found one person whom he thought just made the grade and accepted his qualification from this one fellow. A short while afterwards, he realized that he'd made a huge mistake and that the person from whom he had accepted his qualification was - according to Bankei himself - not qualified to give it

to him! I mean, this is just getting ridiculous! If a person is wise, they know they're wise, and they certainly don't need someone else to tell them."

Greg said that he thought Kevin was misrepresenting Bankei a little. It was quite common in Japan and China back then for people to travel from Master to Master in order to test their own insight, and Bankei was no exception. But it had to be recognized that Bankei was an extraordinary person and it may have indeed been the case that he was disappointed in some of the Masters he met. However, Greg concluded, this did not mean that Bankei considered himself superior to them - or if he did, then it would have been a defect in his insight.

Kevin: "Hopefully he was trying to teach them something. The point is that it was very dishonest, even of Bankei to seek a person who was accepted by the general populace to officially sanction him, just so he could get students."

Greg objected to this by saying that Bankei was merely doing what was appropriate for his time and culture.

David: "But what does enlightenment mean but liberation? - Liberation from cultural illusions and traditions."

Greg disagreed and said that enlightenment meant the ability to do whatever one wants to do. However, he went on, this didn't mean that one stopped observing the law or doing ordinary things. One of the definitions of enlightenment in Zen was that it was the achievement of "ordinary mind". It was often said that an enlightened person would not be recognized in the street because they were so ordinary.

David: "Possibly. But if you're not a wise man yourself, you're just speculating on what is wisdom and what isn't. I mean, at bottom, only a Buddha himself, a wise man, can ascertain what is a wise man, what a wise man would do, and what a wise man values."

Greg said that we could only do our best. Roselyn broke in and said that a wise man or woman made judgments in accordance with her own conventions of wisdom. But Zen was not a wisdom of convention, nor were any of the truly deep experiences on any of the other religious paths. Roselyn stressed that she was referring to wisdom of insight, which is beyond the reach of conventions.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "Wisdom means standing on your own two feet. If it's going to mean anything, it means being able to make judgments, true judgments - judging, for example, whether you're enlightened yourself, or whether someone else is enlightened. Wisdom is the ability to make true judgments."

Roselyn disagreed by saying that the enlightened person "is not wandering around making judgments". Instead, such a person was "wonderfully clear, aware, and fitting with the circumstances".

David: "He makes true judgments effortlessly. He can't stop making them."

Roselyn pointed out to David that he could use the word "she" every now and again. Although she realized that this was a program for "thinking men", there were probably a few women listening.

David: "It's just convenient, you know. It would put a spanner in my works if I had to keep going "he or she" all the time."

Roselyn suggested to David that if this was the case then he should just use "she".

Kevin: "Okay, let's change the subject a bit, and get on to the subject of emotional attachments. Now I have my own view on the role of emotional attachments in spiritual practice, but I'd be interested to know what your views are. Now, I went to one of your talks once, Roselyn, and I think you said that your teacher in Japan was married? Is this correct?"

Roselyn agreed.

Kevin: "Presumably he had some sort of emotional attachment to his wife. What do you think?"

Again, Roselyn agreed.

Kevin: "So, what does this tells you about his level of wisdom? ... I mean, I was bought up to think emotional attachments didn't occur to an enlightened person."

Roselyn replied that the enlightened person was an ordinary person who ate, drank and made love.

Kevin: "And who violently kills people as well I suppose?"

Roselyn gave a confusing answer which seemed to have said that maybe under some circumstances the enlightend person would perhaps, without making a judgment and without thinking, try and stop something happening. She added that by "ordinary" she

did not really mean ordinary, but enlightened and well-practised.

Kevin: "Well, my purpose in life is the survival of wisdom, and every wise person has this as their goal. By wisdom I mean the permanent and effortless consciousness of Ultimate Reality. Now, in such a consciousness - or even in a mind that approaches such a consciousness - emotional desire is extremely weak. Even when it does arise occasionally, it disappears very quickly. There's no way that such a person would get into an emotional relationship with a member of the opposite sex, which is the most powerful emotional attachment on earth - the most primal attachment. I put it to you, that if you judge people by the way they live, then whether they are emotionally attached to the opposite sex gives you a very good indication of their level of wisdom, and their level of understanding."

Roselyn gave a grunt of disapproval. Greg said that there was a problem in the way Kevin used the word "attachment". He said that in Buddhism attachment meant being at the mercy of one's emotions. The Buddhist literature didn't describe an enlightened person as being one who was without emotions, but as one who ceased to act blindly from their emotions.

Kevin: "Emotions are blinding. If a husband is attached to his wife - be he a Zen Master or whatever he is - and if his brother or his best disciple has a sexual relationship with his wife, then there's a very good chance he's going to feel some sort of anger or grief - and this is very, very damaging."

Greg replied that his own teacher, Charlotte Joko Beck, often talked about this. Beck makes the distinction between two forms of emotion - true emotion and false emotion. False emotions were limiting emotions which come from the ego, our conditioned selves, whereas true emotion flows freely when we give up who we are. False emotion is grasping, but true emotion flows from compassion. Greg said that compassion is one of the ultimate values of Buddhism, and that true emotion doesn't exclude personal relationships or sexual relationships. True emotions exclude nothing ordinary, yet the motivation behind all these activities is different.

Kevin: "Okay, we're going have a short musical break now, and we'll be right back to

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

discuss what compassion actually is and whether a mother's love is 'true emotion'."

[MUSIC BREAK]

David: "What is true compassion? What does it mean? To my mind, true compassion is turning someone's mind to Truth. It is causing another person to experience Ultimate Reality. That to me is true compassion, and anything else I would define as 'egotism' and 'promoting ignorance'. I draw a sharp boundary between true and false compassion. I mean, your actions are either promoting wisdom or they're promoting ignorance. Think of the most altruistic person, or someone who is most commonly regarded as an altruistic person - Mother Teresa, for example. She is regarded as a saint by many people. But I regard people like her to be very egotistical - and not spiritual at all. They're not compassionate in the true sense of the word."

Greg enquired why.

David: "Because someone like Mother Teresa is not promoting wisdom. In fact, she's definitely promoting ignorance; so she's evil. I define evil as promoting ignorance."

Roselyn asked what kind of ignorance Mother Teresa promoted.

David: "Attachment to self, attachment to false concepts of existence."

Roselyn asked David to expand on this.

David: "Well, in her case she's promoting Christian dogma, which is based on the preservation of the self. It's a very petty, narrow-minded view that she's promoting, and it causes tremendous harm."

Roselyn pointed out to David that Mother Teresa is also helping people caught in the most abject circumstances and is allowing them to die in an honourable and comfortable way. She said that she thought this was compassion.

David: "Well, I'd characterize it as merely an act of social work. She is merely a social worker."

Roselyn asked David whether he thought compassion and social work were mutually exclusive.

David: "I think so. I draw the distinction between them. So someone who values wisdom and Zen is only interested in other people attaining this Zen. Helping other people overcome their dying sufferings is not Zen. It is social work. It is not spirituality."

Roselyn gave a grunt of disapproval. Greg came in and said that it depended on how Zen was defined. If one limited Zen to mere mental gymnastics, then he could understand how David arrived at his conclusion. But, he went on, Zen was much more than this. It was about how you live and interact with others. It was about how you deal with everyday situations. Greg concluded that David was using a "very limited and religion-based definition of Zen".

Kevin: "Well, I'd like to put a slightly different slant on it than David. I think I have a similar conception, but I'll use different words. When I reason about existence, and indeed when I reason about myself, I very quickly understand that there is no real separation between myself and other people. So when I look at other people, I see them literally as an extension of my own body. Now I've come to the determination that the most important thing in life - for me, the only thing that satisfies me - is absolute perfection, absolute enlightenment. That is, I want to know everything about Ultimate Reality. Now if I want that then *everybody* takes a part in that wanting, and also in the receiving, because they are part of me. If I help other people to attain the high wisdom that I reach for - *that* is understanding - it is compassion - it is love."

Greg replied that he didn't disagree with this, except that it was too limited a definition of compassion. "Compassion", he said, "is any action that flows from egolessness, that flows from inside."

Roselyn said that a reasoned compassion was not real compassion but was a contrived compassion.

Kevin: "This is a very popular idea in all the New Age philosophies - that is, the idea that reasoning and rationality has a fundamental flaw - that it's not realistic, that somehow it's not natural, that it does draw up these sharp divisions between things which supposedly don't have these divisions, when they don't really exist in nature. But I must say that this idea is badly flawed, because reasoning is a part of the human mind, and the discursive, discriminating intelligence is a part of the way that we're made; it is part of the way we've been hard-wired. For as long as we perceive things in any way at all, for as long as we're able to even talk about things,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

the discriminating intelligence is operating. This applies to fully enlightened people like the Buddha as well. If a Buddha can talk about "things", then discriminating intelligence is in operation. When a Buddha determines what is the right course of action, what is not the right course of action, what stage of evolution a student is at, then a very, very severe discriminating intelligence is in operation. And in fact, I put it to you, that the wiser a person is, the more severe is their discriminating intelligence - the more 'vicious' is the discrimination."

David: "You mean the more clarity there is."

Kevin: "Yes, the clarity is purer, the sword is sharper. There is a Buddhist Saint called Manjushri who wields the sword of discrimination."

Roselyn said something like, "The sword is sharp, but there is no viciousness in the mind of the swordsman."

Kevin: "It's just a word. Just a word."

David: "It's a non-emotional discrimination, like that of Bodhidharma. It is a warrior-type viciousness."

Kevin: "Yes, such a discrimination is like the sword of a warrior ..."

Roselyn indicated that she understood what Kevin and David were saying because she said something like, "An act of compassion, slashing away at illusion."

David: "Yes."

Kevin: "Certainly. This is what compassion is. This is why we call this program *The Hour of Judgment*."

Greg quoted a couple of lines from The Sutra of the Third Patriarch: "Do not seek great enlightenment. Do not search for it. Simply cease to cherish opinions." He interpreted "cherishing opinions" to mean being attached to opinions, to sacrificing everything for them. He ended by saying that this is something we all do.

David: "I see this 'no-opinion' attitude quite a bit these days. It's quite a popular philosophy nowadays, and I find it wanting. Because for one thing, this 'no opinion' state of mind is actually an opinion--"

Greg interrupted and said that he did not mean "no opinion." He meant, rather, being attached to opinion. He stressed that he wasn't advocating not having opinions, but that one should know them so well that they

ceased to rule you. Cherishing opinions is when one is being ruled by the deep-seated conditioning which is the ego. He reminded us that the points we were discussing were subtle and that one of the first principles of Zen was to cease cherishing language.

David: "And you believe that this ceasing to cherish opinions is something different to using reasoning?"

Greg agreed with this and said that reasoning was important in everyday matters. If he wanted, for example, to get to the other side of Brisbane he would necessarily have to call upon reason and make certain decisions and judgments.

David: "Okay, but in the matter of Zen, in the matter of this search for Ultimate Reality--"

Roselyn interrupted by commenting that Kevin and David seemed to be using the term "Ultimate Reality" a good deal. She added that in the search for this Ultimate Reality, reasoning is allowed to "fall away".

David: "But surely, that's after one has used reasoning!"

Roselyn asked David what he meant by "after one has used reasoning".

David: "Well, I would say that--"

Roselyn interrupted and said that she was talking about practice. She was talking about "sitting and facing a wall" and letting reason just fall away.

Kevin: "Reasoning is the finger that points at the moon."

Roselyn and Greg both jumped in and together they said something like, "Don't mistake the finger for the moon!" Greg added that this was a fundamental principle in Zen.

Kevin: "Remember what I said! 'Reasoning is the finger that points at the moon.'"

Greg said that reasoning was not the finger which points at the moon. Roselyn added that Kevin was mistaking the finger for the moon. She said that reason may point to the moon, but so did chanting and sutras.

David: "Let's talk about this 'falling away'. How did you arrive at this 'falling away'?"

Roselyn replied that it was the practice of Zen.

David: "Yes, but how did you ascertain that 'letting reason fall away' is the right thing to do?"

Greg said that people should try it and see if it worked.

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

David: "Some people practise "letting reason fall away" and they end up in a psychiatric ward, because--"

Greg objected and said that this would never happen under a good teacher, because a good teacher would make sure that their students never extended themselves beyond their capacity.

David: "Alright. So, you've used reasoning to ascertain that a teacher, a good teacher, is necessary to--"

Roselyn interrupted by saying that David and Kevin kept using the word "reasoning". She reckoned "experience" was the key determinant - the experience that "has come down through the millenia that allows us to function as teachers, and which has guided us as teachers". She stressed that experience was not solely an intellectual thing, but also an allegorical, right- brain/left-brain thing.

Kevin: "But as responsible human beings we always have to test and verify our experience. I mean, the senses give us all kinds of information, but the only way to verify our experiences is by analyzing them and finding out if they agree with reason and logic, and if they're conducive to our goals in life."

Greg asked Kevin what would happen if "we just sat and watched".

Kevin: "We'd be no different to vegetables."

Greg thought that this was interesting.

Kevin: "A lot of meditation teachers today get their students into a state of what I would call unconsciousness."

Greg said that this was not true Zen practice.

Kevin: "Yes, I'm aware of that. And they reach a state of mind which is very clear, where they're reasoning and thinking, and everything is happening so much more clearly, where they're making connections between things which they never made before. They're really alive, they feel so connected with everything. All of a sudden they can make sense out of so much of what has happened in their life, and they suddenly know where they're going in life ..."

Greg replied that if a student came to him saying all this, he would immediately ask him or her that if they met the most difficult person in their lives would they still be able to experience those things.

Kevin: "If it was an intense enough experience they probably would be able to continue to experience that clarity of mind."

Greg doubted this.

Kevin: "I mean, if someone has just taken a big shot of heroin, the experience can counter most of what can happen in the physical world."

Greg said that this was nothing to do with the consciousness he was talking about.

Kevin: "Altered states of consciousness can be very similar to a drug experience."

David: "We're talking here of the god realms, as described in Buddhism."

Roselyn asked David to repeat the term he had just used.

David: "The god realms."

Greg said that he had never heard of them.

Kevin: "If a person has just experienced a very, very profound - I hate to use the word "profound" - altered state of consciousness, which has really permeated them and changed the way their mind is, then that state of mind can stay with a person for a couple of weeks, just through it's own power. But despite its power, this particular consciousness is by no means an enlightened consciousness."

Roselyn questioned whether David or Kevin really knew what they were talking about. She said that she kept on hearing the term "true enlightenment", but she doubted whether there was any real understanding involved. She asked Kevin whether he had "been there".

Kevin: "I have, yes."

Roselyn asked if he knew this for sure.

Kevin: "Yes, I do."

Roselyn replied somewhat sarcastically that, of course, she had forgotten that Kevin used his own analyzing mind. She said that what she and Greg had been trying to convey was that the Zen experience could not be told or touched by the analyzing mind. She reckoned that the analyzing mind always fell short.

Kevin: "Well, no, you're wrong there. Anything that the mind can conceive of, whether it be enlightenment or Zen or whatever - anything the mind can actually have a word for - can be perceived by the reasoning mind."

Roselyn asked Kevin if he could "perceive skiing". In other words, if he had never skied

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

down the Rocky Mountains, could he nevertheless perceive it.

Kevin: "Yes, if I can conceive of 'skiing' then I can indeed perceive it. You have to remember that the wiser a person is then the more profound their perceptions are. Wise people can perceive things that ignorant people cannot."

Roselyn replied that she heard a great deal of confidence in the expression "wise person". She enquired if this meant that wisdom came at the expense of the experience.

Kevin: "Experience is only on a very, very gross level. It is not to be trusted."

Roselyn thought that this was an interesting word that Kevin had used. Greg added that he thought experience, far from being gross, could be refined endlessly.

Kevin: "Well, in a sense, even reasoning can be said to be an experience. But ultimately reason is always required to verify what is true, and what is false."

Greg said that the real question was what would happen if we just sat and watched.

David: "Actually, I'm reminded of *Hakuin*. *Hakuin* was a famous Zen monk and he lived in a time in which he thought the Zen was in a hopelessly poor condition, because everybody was just sitting and watching, practicing mindless Zen. Everybody was just thinking to themselves, 'Nothing is born, nothing dies. Everything is perfect'."

Greg objected to this last statement by claiming that they were just thoughts.

David: "What he saw was a total lethargy, a total ..."

*Greg interrupted by saying that he thought it interesting that out of this lethargy came *Hakuin*.*

David: "He came out of it because he stressed the use of the intellect."

*Both Greg and Roselyn objected to this strenuously. Greg said that Roselyn probably knew more about *Hakuin* than anyone else in the studio.*

David: "He stressed the use of the koan. But in the probing of a koan, the analytical mind is used."

Roselyn said that a koan was not something that was probed intellectually.

Kevin: "You really are absolutely wrong there."

*Roselyn repeated her claim that a koan was not probed intellectually. She added that *Hakuin* had thought this as well.*

Kevin: "That is simply not true."

Roselyn replied that since "wrong" was a concept it didn't bother her to be thought of as wrong.

David: "*Hakuin*'s enlightenment arose after years of cultivating the burning desire to pierce through these koans."

Roselyn asked David what the sound of one hand clapping was.

David: "I don't have the faintest idea."

*Roselyn said that this was one of *Hakuin*'s koans, or, rather, it was attributed to him even though it actually came from an earlier Master.*

David: "Yes, but he was stressing the burning desire to *break through*. He often spoke of the 'Great Barrier'."

Roselyn agreed with this.

David: "Right, so I see we're living in an age very similar to *Hakuin*'s age, where nobody believes in the intellect, or in the importance of breaking through any Great Barriers."

Kevin: "Our age is even worse than his age in that respect."

Roselyn objected and said that the Great Barrier could not possibly be broken through by the intellect.

Kevin: "And do you know that from experience, or from reasoning?"

Roselyn said she knew it from experience.

Kevin: "And how do you know that your experience is correct?"

Roselyn said she knew it was correct because "someone else who had experienced it, and who had had his own experience examined, examined mine".

Kevin: "And how do you know that *their* experience was correct? ... You see, you can only judge someone who at your own level of wisdom or below. It is impossible to judge someone's wisdom who is at a higher level than yourself. So it is meaningless that somebody else may have told you that you're at a certain level of understanding, because there is no way that you can verify whether they know what they're talking about."

Greg said that in the practice of Zen, one was verifying it experientially at every moment, but not at a judgmental level. He said

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

that it wasn't a case of sitting around and working out where one was on a scale of 1 to 100. On the contrary, one should just sit and watch, or give oneself over to one's koan. It is a consciousness in which questions are not being asked, but rather one's own consciousness is just being explored. He finished by saying that we will always be exploring it.

Kevin: "Well, my reasoning tells me that we'll have to bring this discussion to an end. I'm sure we'll be talking about this subject at length in later programs. So if you enjoyed this discussion then don't forget to tune in in future weeks. Now, David and I have been trying to get a couple of feminists in here to talk with us about the differences between the sexes, which are vast, and to talk about equality - whether there is such a thing as equality and whether equality is moral. And we've had an awfully hard time trying to find someone to come on the program. We must have invited about twenty feminists so far. They some-

times show a little interest at first, but when we tell them this is *The Hour of Judgment--*"

Roselyn reminds the listeners that it is a program for "men only".

Kevin: "Which is for men only, and that we want to get down to the nitty-gritty of Ultimate Truth, they always back-out. Actually, we've never had this problem with men, the problem has only been with women. So if any of our listeners out there feel that they're qualified to come in and have a discussion with us about men and women, please drop us a line, we're at: P.O. Box 207, St Lucia, 4067."

David: "Or we'll have to get men onto the program."

Kevin: "Yes, we're actually seriously considering having some men argue the point of view for women, and we don't really want to do that. So, till next week, goodbye from us."⁵²

THE THINKING MAN’S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

WISDOM AND RATIONALITY

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -

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13th August 1995

Guest:

- Dan Rowden - Freelance philosopher

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

VOICE OVER: "We wish to advise that the following program is rated MO, and contains explicit rational argument, irony, and wise themes."

David: "Hello everyone and welcome to *The Hour of Judgment*. I'm David Quinn, with me is Kevin Solway, and together we present Australia's number one radio program for sages. Tonight, we'll be doing things a little differently. We'll be having a leisurely chat amongst friends and we'll be examining some of the basic issues of the philosophic life, such as 'What does it mean to live rationally?' and 'Why is it important to live rationally?'. Those of you who have been following our programs would know by now that Kevin and I regard the life of reason to be the highest life open to mankind. So we'll be going into this issue a bit, and to help us we are joined by someone who both Kevin and I have known for sometime and who's known to indulge in a thought or two himself - Dan Rowden. Hello."

Dan: "Good evening."

David: "Dan, you're a founding member of the Atheist Society. Can you tell us a little bit about that?"

Dan: "Well, you'd know as much as I would, actually. But yeah, the Atheist Society began a couple of years ago now. One of the reasons for kick starting it off was basically to try and rescue the concept of atheism from those people who would see harm done to it. Now, most people would imagine that I'd be talking about Christian fundamentalists or even the mainstream of the religious community. But apart from them, I'm really talking more about the rationalists, the humanists and other sundry agnostics, because it is these people who represent a notion of atheism that is completely false."

David: "So it sounds as if you have a very esoteric type of notion of atheism. What is an atheist in your view?"

Dan: "Well, I guess perhaps it is somewhat esoteric, but all things that are important are esoteric."

David: "Well, it's certainly different from the normal run of things."

Dan: "That's true. I would define an atheist as one who knows what God is."

David: "Whoa! You should have been on the program last week, Dan. This is a koan. Well, explain yourself."

Dan: "It's only a koan to those people who hold the traditional view of atheism - namely, an atheist is someone who rejects concepts of God. But the thing is, whether you say that you know God exists or does not exist, you are claiming something very significant. You are claiming to *understand* Ultimate Reality. Because let's face it, what is God if not that which is ultimately real. So to say that God exists or doesn't exist you have to know precisely what God is and precisely what it means for something to exist."

David: "Well, you're obviously not talking about the Christian God here, are you? What do you mean by God?"

Dan: "Well, on some level, I'm talking about the Christian God. But I'm really talking about any concept of an ultimate reality which is finite in nature. This is different to my own concept of God, which is an infinite reality, an infinite state of being. This 'infinite' of mine is totally opposed to finite things like this pen, for example, or to you and I. A lot of religious traditions *talk* about their concept of God as being infinite, but that's all it is - talk."

David: "They don't really believe it."

Dan: "They don't really believe it."

David: "They don't think it through."

Dan: "They don't live it. They don't live it at all, because they really love to believe in a God which is finite. A perfect example of this occurred on your program a few weeks ago, when you were talking to some Anglican

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

priests. One moment, they were talking about God - simply because it suited them to do so - as being something inconceivable and incomprehensible - in other words, infinite. And then five minutes later, they described God as being 'love'!"

David: "Yes, that's right."

Dan: "Which is something intrinsically, inherently, completely and utterly finite. I consider this to be a type of blasphemy."

David: "It's a flat contradiction, isn't it?"

Dan: "Yeah, it certainly is that, but it is also extremely blasphemous. I define blasphemy as any statement which is misrepresentative of God. And so if a statement implies that God somehow has finite qualities, then it's blasphemous."

Kevin: "Danny, you're describing God now as being infinite, and obviously you believe in the Infinite, in an infinite truth, and you describe a true atheist as being someone who believes in this infinite truth, which for convenience I presume you give the name of 'God'. Now the fact that you use the name of God, does this mean that you believe Jesus, for example, used the word 'God' to refer to the same infinite truth and in which case Jesus himself would be an atheist."

Dan: "I'm damned if I know. I've got no idea what Jesus meant when he used those terms. If he did mean those things, then sure, I would consider and in fact I do actually consider Jesus to be an atheist. Yeah, certainly."

Kevin: "A wise man."

Dan: "Well, a wise man and an atheist are the same thing. Necessarily."

David: "I don't think there'd be too many Christians agreeing with you, Dan."

Dan: "Probably not."

Kevin: "Or maybe, if they were true Christians, they would."

Dan: "Well, the thing is, Christians have the traditional concept of atheism and what I'm trying to do is rescue that concept from them, because it's a false concept. I mean, there are all kinds of people out there who call themselves atheists, who are *not* atheists. Because when you scratch the surface of these so-called atheists you find that the metaphysics that they have - the idea they have of ultimate reality - is classically agnostic. They say things like, 'We can't know for sure if God exists or not', which is the classic

agnostic position. And yet these people call themselves atheists."

David: "Okay, let's take the Christian concept of God. Oh, well, which one shall we take?"

Dan: "Well, which one will we take?"

David: "Say Carl Wieland's view, for example, where he says that God is beyond space and time, is infinitely mysterious, and is responsible for all creation. Are you saying that you know for certain that such a God doesn't exist?"

Dan: "Yes. Yes, I know with absolute certainty that such a God is impossible. This is because such a God is finite. If God isn't infinite, then God is just a thing, like you and I. And this point was actually raised by you during that program. If God is finite then God possess all the limitations and the basic characteristics of all finite things. That is, as things exist relative to other things, they are temporary, ephemeral, caused, and so a God that is finite in this sense is--"

Kevin: "Not much of a God."

Dan: "Not much of a God at all. No, just a big powerful being, basically."

David: "I tend to look at it this way. If we can conceive of God in any way - whether it be an old man in the sky, or a primal force, or something or other - it must be composed of cause and effect. Cause and effect is much more fundamental to a God, or to anything you can conceive of - Intelligence, Cosmic Mind, whatever. Cause and effect is more fundamental to existence than all of those concepts. One can't get more fundamental than cause and effect. In other words, God is irrelevant."

Kevin: "God was created by something."

David: "Yes. Created by us."

Dan: "Even further to that, if you're conceiving of something, if you have a concept - I'm talking about a direct, real, tangible concept - then the thing conceived is necessarily finite, because that thing is not you. Therefore, it must have boundaries. Therefore, it is not infinite."

David: "Right."

Dan: "So, all you can really say is that if you say anything other than God is infinite, you're wrong."

David: "But a Christian mightn't have any problem with a finite God. He might conceive of a Creator of some kind, separate

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

from nature, separate from the world, separate from His creation - what's the problem? They still say it's an infinite God. That's what they say, don't they?"

Dan: "Unfortunately they do, yes. The problem is that something which is infinite can't be separate. I think we need to establish what we're talking about when we use the term 'infinite'."

David: "Alright."

Dan: "'Infinite' does not mean really, really big. It does not mean 'humongous'. It doesn't mean incomprehensibly large. It means *not finite*. It means having no boundaries. It means there can be nothing which is not a part of this infinite. So the idea that there can be this infinite God and at the same time something other - like the world, for example - is logically completely absurd. Just totally absurd."

Kevin: "But Danny, you mentioned the word 'logically' there. I mean, I can see three major problems with your argument."

Dan: "You're hitting me with this rather early in the piece."

Kevin: "Well, it's a very important point, and it's best to get it out of the way right now - perhaps we can play music for the rest of the program if it defeats you totally. That's okay by us. Firstly, you are using logic, that's your first problem. Secondly, you're using human logic, as opposed to any other kind of logic you could be using."

Dan: "Am I?"

Kevin: "And thirdly, you're using male logic, which is probably the worst thing of all. Now, how do you answer that? I mean, I've got you, haven't I?"

Dan: "Well, if you were a female Christian you would probably imagine that you do. The thing is when we talk about logic what we're really talking about is reason. Okay? Reason is the ultimate authority for everything, for absolutely every analytical thought you have - even if you're not conscious of it."

Kevin: "But you're still using reason to arrive at that conclusion, surely."

Dan: "I can't not. It's impossible for me not to. When you were talking to the Zen Master last week, she seemed to imagine that there could be analytical thought processes that were somehow not placed in reason. I'm not sure how she worked that out, but her reasoning was obviously slightly poor."

Kevin: "She was obviously using feminine logic. So, this--"

David: "Which is what?"

Dan: "Which is an oxymoron, of course."

Kevin: "Feminine logic is the logic that women generally use."

Dan: "Oh well, no, it's the mental process that they refer to as logic."

Kevin: "Ah, right. So, if you use feminine logic wouldn't you arrive at a different conclusion?"

Dan: "Quite possibly, but if you were insane you might arrive at a different conclusion as well and yet refer to it as logic. You see, it's only the truly logical reasoning mind that knows what logic is."

Kevin: "What's insane is surely very subjective."

Dan: "And what is sane is subjective, and only a sane person knows whether they're right or not. This gets back to authority, the question of authority."

Kevin: "What do you think about the idea that in another universe there may be a different form of logic which is completely different to the kind of logic we use in this universe?"

Dan: "Well, for a start, there is only one universe. There are no other universes."

Kevin: "Okay. You got me there. This is using the definition of a universe to include everything that is."

Dan: "Yeah, well, all things only exist by definition. *I* define what logic is. *I* define what reason is. *I* define what existence is. If people want to use other definitions, if people want to operate by a different kind of mental faculty and use the word logic to describe that, fine, good luck to them, but it is not logic by my definition."

Kevin: "Fair enough."

David: "Well, that's subjective too, isn't it?"

Dan: "Yep, if you want to call it subjective."

Kevin: "Can you give me a reason why one should be rational? I mean, I meet a lot of people who delight in being illogical. There was an article in *The Australian* of all newspapers - this is the supposedly intellectual newspaper - saying that, 'changing reasons is human nature - we should celebrate illogic rather than criticize it'. Now, what reason can you give people - assuming that some of your

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

arguments are logical - why on earth should people be logical in the first place? People are quite happy being illogical."

Dan: "Yeah, they are. The reason for that is that they're largely unconscious. They have no consciousness. What I mean by that is that they are not aware of cause and effect. They're not aware of the consequences of their lives. They're not aware that everything they do and think produces effects. And it's reason and logic that makes one aware of that. If people want to live blindly, if they consciously, actually consciously, make the decision that they're not going to value logic and reason, that they're not going to value consistency, and that they're happy for the consequences of what this will produce, then I'm prepared to say, 'Okay, fine. Fair enough'. I'll battle against these people, but I can at least acknowledge that they've made some sort of conscious decision. But most people don't even do this. And so they're not aware of the consequences of that irrationality. It's just plainly absurd. Everyone spends their entire lives whinging and complaining about all the suffering in the world, all the violence, all the prejudice, all the injustice, all the intolerance, but they don't link irrationality and inconsistency and contradiction with those realities. And that's because they don't value reason. They use reason, everyone uses reason, but they use reason expediently. They use reason to bolster their happiness and their egos. They don't actually value reason and you have to value reason for it to be meaningful."

David: "Well, they might say that you are being unrealistic. It's too unrealistic to expect people to live rationally. We are weak, finite, human creatures."

Kevin: "We're animals."

David: "Yeah, and like this article you were talking about before, expecting everyone to live rationally just causes all sorts of suffering. How would you answer that one, Danny?"

Kevin: "It's human to be irrational because, let's face it, we came from the animals. We're little more than chimpanzees when you look at us. Certainly when you look at the way we behave we're little more than chimpanzees. So, why should we expect people to be more than chimpanzees? I mean, aren't we getting ahead of ourselves a bit?"

Dan: "Okay, how will I tackle that one?"

David: "It's a question of valuing. This is what I see in the world around me. We no longer value rationality. We no longer value consistency or perfection. We celebrate irrationality. Irrationality is nowadays a virtue. And as far as I'm concerned this represents a real degeneration of society. I think we're living in one of the most backward times for centuries, precisely because we don't have any ideals. I mean, we just accept irrationality as being the norm and there is nothing we can or should do about it."

Dan: "Well, yeah. The thing is I'm not suggesting for a second that the philosophic life - if I can describe it as that, which is the life of valuing reason and desperately wanting to know what is true and basically trying to live ethically - I'm not suggesting that this is not difficult. But there was a time, which has long since disappeared, when ideals were valued. We don't live in those times anymore. But the thing is people nowadays are absolute morons, because they still crave solutions to all their problems. And they will continue to suffer no matter what. People will suffer because they have attachments. It's like if you're ill and you need to take medicine and the medicine tastes absolutely shocking, you've got a choice - either you don't take the medicine and continue to suffer in a meaningless way, or you swallow the bitter pill. And all I'm saying is that if you swallow the bitter pill, you have an outcome. If you value reason truly, absolutely, uncompromisingly, you do get an outcome and that outcome is wisdom. And it places you beyond all the normal suffering. I think it was the German philosopher, Nietzsche, who said that people don't suffer *enough*, and I agree. I think people don't suffer enough. They *think* they suffer terribly, but they don't suffer enough, because their level of suffering isn't such that they desperately want to get beyond it."

David: "It doesn't really affect them, in a way. It doesn't drive them to actually want to solve their suffering."

Dan: "Yeah, it's not quite strong enough for them to have that desire. But the trouble is there are a number of people in the world who do suffer sufficiently to want to pursue solutions and who value reason and truth. And for those people to live in an environment such as ours is very painful. Because

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

they're the ones with the ideals, and that idealism is totally crushed by the herd, by the mediocrity of the world."

Kevin: "Perhaps we could look at this question a little bit more. In the past, there were many great human beings, thinking human beings. I'm thinking of people like Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, some of the great Zen Masters - unlike the one we had in here last week - but rather people like Hakuin. Who else was there? Socrates wasn't all that bad."

David: "One or two of the Buddhas."

Kevin: "Yeah, there were quite a few thinking people in the past, but there are none today - present company excepted, of course. What is it, do you think, that has brought us to this sorry state? There is probably more people alive on the planet today than there have been in all history, but there are no thinkers! How did we get here? What happened? Where did we lose the plot?"

Dan: "Gee, I can sense this conversation becoming slowly more and more dangerous."

Kevin: "We have to cause people suffering somehow, haven't we? We were just discussing how people weren't suffering enough. So, I think we should look at the causes."

David: "Well, one of them is the failure of masculine reason. Like science, for example. We're living in a world now where no one believes in absolute truth. Everything is relative. Everything is grey. Nothing is black and white, and so on. So male reason has come to be regarded as futile, as impotent."

Kevin: "Can I ask, Dave, why do you use this term 'male reason'? I know a lot of our listeners will take that very jarringly. It sounds quite sexist. Why male reason? Why not female?"

David: "I'm actually just using a conventional term that a lot of people use. For example, I've heard a lot of women say that science is a very masculine based activity and that there needs to be more women in the science fields in order to humanize them. But I use the term 'male reason' because reason is something that men value. At least some men do. Or at least they're bought up to think that reason and truth have some sort of significance. But I see this very, very little in women. When I go about my business during the day and say to people, to women, that I dedi-

cate my life to Truth, they look at me as if I'm from another planet."

Kevin: "They're already there, aren't they, really?"

David: "Yes, of course, they're Buddhas. But when I talk to men, even if they don't understand the concept 'truth', they at least have some sort of inkling that it is important in some way. Even though they may never take it up themselves, something in them tells them that Truth, or the understanding of reality, is significant. That's a big difference. It is because men have been brought up to be doers. They've been bought up to create inventions, and to live by their wits."

Kevin: "To be individuals."

David: "Yeah. Whereas women have the comfort, or the shell, of femininity. Femininity is a very, very powerful tool - it gets a lot of benefits in this world. Men don't have this, so they're forced to be more reliant on their minds, which causes them to think, and some men go on to make a breakthrough and thus see the very power of thinking. They're the great ones."

Kevin: "Have there ever been any female thinkers, do you think?"

David: "Well, I can only think of one whom I'd class as a female thinker and that's Celia Green. She works in Oxford, doesn't she? Unfortunately, she is wasting her life studying parapsychology, but she had that sort of dialectical mind. She understood the deeper, ironical side of life. She's definitely a class above the Germaine Greer's and the Naomi Wolf's of this world. She actually has a masculine mind."

Kevin: "She's a man, basically."

David: "Well, almost a man."

Kevin: "Almost."

David: "She has the ingredients of a man."

Dan: "Well, doesn't that eliminate her as a female thinker?"

Kevin: "Yeah."

David: "Well it does, but we're talking about a thinker in a female body."

Kevin: "I tell you what. I think we should pause here for a little bit of music and we'll come right back and talk about something of incredible importance."

[MUSIC BREAK]

David: "Okay, Danny, you were going to say something."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Dan: "Yeah. You were talking about the direction that society has taken and how it's moved away from valuing reason, and you were also mentioning about science, about how there's a perception that science has failed us, that even rationality itself has failed us. Just a couple of points on that. I blame men for all of this, because it's their own mediocrity which is the cause. Exhibit A: those physicists that you spoke to a few programs ago. Now, they haven't got the gumption, the guts, the courage, the integrity ... they don't value truth sufficiently to come out and baldly state that science and truth have nothing whatsoever to do with each other, and that science has never been about pursuing truth, that by it's very nature has nothing to do with truth."

David: "Yes, but if you pin them down on this, they say, 'Oh yes, science has nothing to do with truth. Of course!' But then, the next day they tell everybody that science is about the search for truth. They want two bob each way."

Dan: "Well, that's right. They don't value truth. They don't actually value truth."

David: "That's why they believe things can arise uncaused."

Kevin: "Well, I think more accurately, they don't believe there is any other truth than in their science. They're not aware that there is any kind of philosophic truth, or an absolute truth, or a spiritual truth. They're not aware of any such thing."

David: "Right, but nevertheless the world thinks that science is the fountain of all knowledge. People like to think that physics is going to discover the secret of everything, even though they know deep down that it won't. So it is that perception which causes this idea that reason is ultimately useless and can't really uncover anything. And it is all due to people like Paul Davies. You know, Paul Davies is regarded as a great man. I've heard people call him a genius. He's even won this massive prize for the promotion of religion, which is supposed to be about ultimate knowledge. But the guy is an idiot. He really is. He likes to believe that things arise uncaused, and that time began with the Big Bang. He often says that he decided to enter into physics because he couldn't accept that Nature is 'a brute fact'. He decided that physics holds answers, that it can answer the big

questions of life. But it only takes ten seconds to work out that science can never, ever uncover truth, because it is a finite activity."

Dan: "Well, I believe, even more than that, science cannot explain anything. Science can't explain anything at all."

David: "That's because whatever is used to explain something will itself need an explanation."

Dan: "Yeah. The word is contingent. All scientific observations and facts are contingent. That means they're conditional on further observation."

David: "But the scientists say that. I mean, those physicists that we had on the program did say that, didn't they?"

Dan: "Well, they admitted it."

David: "They said, 'Yes, it's contingent. So?'"

Dan: "This is why I talk about their mediocrity. If they weren't so bloody mediocre this would have an impact on them. They'd think, 'Hang on, if that's the case, then why am I actually indulging in science? Is it just for pure utility or what?'"

David: "Well, they want their two bob both ways. I mean, they really want it to be about truth, since it makes them seem more important, and they can think they're getting somewhere."

Kevin: "And they can get more money."

David: "But when you actually pin them down on whether they are *for* the truth, they say, 'No, no, it's all about utility'."

Kevin: "It's a sin that Paul Davies and Philip Adams are putting on this series on SBS straight after this program called *The Big Questions*. The only time they actually even mention a big question is in the sixth and last episode, and that was the very episode which Paul Davies didn't want to do. He's got no answers, anyway."

Dan: "And the question of that episode was what?"

Kevin: "Does God exist? That's the question they saved up for the sixth episode of *The Big Questions*."

Dan: "So they saved the biggest one till the sixth episode."

Kevin: "And he's got no answer for it."

Dan: "Well, the reason he's got no answer for it is because he refuses, like most scientists, to take himself outside the parameters of the empirical method. Yet the empirical

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

method doesn't explain anything. Most people working in philosophy departments have a bit of an idea of this, but they're not much better."

David: "Well, they don't know the truth themselves. For example, the two philosophers we had on the very first show of *The Hour of Judgment* didn't believe that truth can be known by the human mind. Philosophers nowadays look at science and all the scientific products such as TVs and cars, and think deep down that philosophy is a very inferior kind of activity indeed."

Dan: "Yeah, but when you pin the ones who hold that strong agnostic perception, they say, 'Oh, we can't know anything ultimately'. And you ask them, 'Why'? And they give *explanations*. And then you say, 'Isn't that saying something about the nature of our existence, about phenomena?' And as you pin them down you find that they inevitably work themselves back into what is an ultimate position, which is the very position they deny anyone can have. There's an inherent contradiction in the agnostic position."

Kevin: "It reminds me of Phillip Adams' philosophy, where he says that he's absolutely certain that nothing is certain. And of course he would never claim to be *wise* - but at the same time he claims he hasn't got the foggiest idea what wisdom is. Naturally, he believes himself to be wise."

David: "'The older I grow, the less I know'."

Dan: "Hmm, hmm. And this is one of the problems with modern society. As I said earlier, I acknowledge that the philosophic life is difficult and I accept that there will be people who will look at it and say, 'I can't do this. I don't have the strength for this. I'm too old. I'm over thirty. I've got attachments. I'm married. I've got kids. I've got a television. I've got a mortgage.' If they would say this honestly it wouldn't be so bad. But their egos can't deal with it. They can't deal with this pitiful image about them which is projected into the world. Phillip Adams is a perfect example of this. He's wimped out, basically. He had potential for the truthful life, but over time he's wimped out and he can't handle it. So instead he constructs his own type of wisdom, which is a wisdom of ignorance. He talks about how you can't define wisdom. 'Who would want to define wisdom?' he

says. I find this absolutely foolish. I mean, the word is in the dictionary, for heavens sake! One can define the word."

David: "Yeah, he's got right to the very basis of life and worked out that it's uncertain. Everything is uncertain."

Dan: "His greatest sin is that he wants to demolish the very concept of wisdom. But it's like the word 'fart' - it's in the dictionary and everyone knows what it means. It's the same with wisdom. It's been used in all the literature, it's in all the dictionaries, everyone has an idea what wisdom refers to and that is the highest knowledge, the knowledge of what is ultimately real, or the knowledge of God. It would be better if one said, 'Look, I don't know what the substance of this wisdom is and I'm not sure if anyone can know the substance'. But to take that step and start undermining the very concept is crazy. And it comes through the cowardice and the egotism of not wanting to acknowledge that you're not fit for the philosophic life. Which is fair enough, if you're honest about it. I don't condemn people for their weakness."

David: "It's similar to what I found talking to Carl Wieland a couple of weeks ago. People have said that we should have licked Carl Wieland and that Carl Wieland wiped us on the floor, but I remember when I was talking to him here in the studio and listening to him that I realized - even though he is regarded by most people as being a total loony and his views are obviously full of holes--"

Kevin: "We should remind people that he believes the universe was created six thousand years ago in six or seven days, and that the whole earth was covered by a great flood and that all the animals on the earth in pairs went onto the Ark ... we could go on."

Dan: "In short, that the Genesis account in the Bible is historical fact."

David: "And he claims that this is a credible theory, a credible alternative to evolution and the Big Bang. You know, when I look at someone like Carl Wieland, I see that he is no different to the physicists that we had on the week before, or to Paul Davies. These physicists say that in the sub-atomic realm things arise uncaused. This is pure creationism! They say that time began at the Big Bang. Pure creationism! So when Carl Wieland looks at these people and subconsciously sees

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

that they're twits, well then ... how different is he?"

Kevin: "He thinks, 'My position is strong. It's just as strong as theirs - almost.'"

David: "That's right. His arguments are very ingenious, but so are the scientists'. They use very ingenious arguments to justify their pursuits. If you take away the actual scientific activity, there is not a lot of difference between them."

Kevin: "What hope is there today for a young person who does want to live a rational life? We live in a world which is politically correct, where you're not allowed to say things which are true. No matter how true it might be, you're not allowed to say anything which might offend a lot of people. So how can a wise man exist in the world today? Is there any chance? What place is there in universities for a wise man?"

David: "None whatsoever."

Dan: "Yeah, and why would a wise man have anything to do with universities in the first place? What you say is true, Kevin, but every wise man, every individual of potential, all the great thinkers, they all existed in that kind of culture to some degree. There's always been some form of tyranny, some form of the herd expressing itself."

David: "There's never been a wise culture."

Dan: "All those great people have had to grow and flourish and do their best within that kind of culture. So it's just a matter of doing it."

David: "Yes, but what about last century in Europe? Germany, for example, was a very idealistic society. It valued perfection, even though this was mainly political. That's why you had a lot of philosophers back then in Germany last century; Schopenhauer and--"

Kevin: "Nietzsche and so on."

David: "Kant, and all those sort of people. And you compare that to our age nowadays - it's the complete opposite."

Dan: "Well, I'm not sure if I agree with that, actually, as I wouldn't put Immanuel Kant in the same category as Nietzsche."

David: "Yes, that's true. I shouldn't have said Kant."

Dan: "Maybe Weininger would have been a better choice. In any generation, there's always only a tiny handful of people who value reason and truth sufficiently to really live that difficult life and to pursue it. And I

think that's just humanity's karma, really. It's a difficult thing to get around. Again, this pursuing wisdom ultimately is a very individualistic thing. If you value truth then you just do the best you can, no matter where you are. No matter what culture you're in, no matter what political situation you're in, you just do your best."

David: "What about this idea that some cultures are wiser than others? I was talking to a fellow the other day who believes that the Aboriginal culture is spiritual. And then there are the American Indians, or even India itself. Are these cultures wiser than ours?"

Dan: "Was this guy wise? If he wasn't then he's not in a position to make these sorts of judgments. But yeah, it's very popular now to talk about any old culture, especially indigenous cultures, being somehow spiritual. I find that completely meaningless, because I define spirituality as having a direct, conscious relationship with God. But to have that you have to know precisely what God is. So spirituality and wisdom are the same thing. Now the question is, do these people in these indigenous cultures understand what is ultimately real?"

Kevin: "Yes, that's right. I think a lot of people today say that the Aboriginals are spiritual because they have some type of relationship with the land and with nature. But when you're actually living on the land and you have to get your food from the land and you're out there living in a cave, my word, you're going to have a relationship with nature! But it doesn't mean you're going to have an understanding of ultimate truth."

Dan: "No, it doesn't. You can say the same thing - and I know people will cringe when I say this - but you could say the same thing about wombats. Wombats have a really intimate relationship with the land. So what!"

David: "Well, this fellow says that the Aboriginal culture was more spiritual because they emphasised the connectedness of everything - that sort of thing. I told him that that's not really interconnectedness. True interconnectedness is seeing that things have no real existence. There is no beginning or end to anything. This is true connectedness. Do aborigines have this idea?"

Kevin: "Even the concept of connectedness is wrong."

David: "That's right, it implies separation."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "Yeah."

David: "One can't judge cultures in the light of wisdom, because wisdom is an individual pursuit, as you were saying."

Dan: "Yeah, it's meaningless to conjecture whether this culture is wise as opposed to that culture. It's just completely and utterly meaningless, because you can only make that determination if you're wise yourself."

Kevin: "It's not meaningless for the wise person to do so."

Dan: "No, but the thing is that we people ought to be pursuing wisdom."

David: "Alright, so we're saying that culture doesn't make any impact on a wise man. We were talking before about how the age that we're living in - in Australia, and in the late twentieth century - is a completely deluded society. It's difficult to conceive of a more deluded society than Australian society, but then, when I look at all the other countries in the world Australia is looking good. Does culture make an impact?"

Dan: "Well, I guess it has a significance in the sense that some cultures, some societies, value freedom of thought and expression a little more than others, and a society like that is obviously going to be a slightly better environment for someone who's pursuing knowledge and understanding. But whether you can draw any sort of stimulus or teaching - if I can call it that - from that society is another question entirely. I mean, freedom of thought and expression is useful and it's a good thing. That's why Australia is one of the better countries around. But I don't think any particular culture has more to offer in terms of understanding than another."

Kevin: "It's interesting how England has never produced any great philosophers, but America has in fact produced one great philosopher and that's Bob Dylan, and we're about to hear a song of his right now."

[MUSIC BREAK]

David: "Well, surely you're joking, Kevin, about Bob Dylan being a philosopher."

Kevin: "Well, it's all relative, isn't it? I mean, he's a philosopher relative to other Americans. No, I'm serious! Actually, to my mind, that song was about the desire for immortality. Remember that Bob Dylan wrote it when he was very young. I think he was in his early twenties, so he wrote it when he was still partly human. The older you get

the more American you become, I think - in any country. But the desire for immortality is the desire for perfection. It is the desire for permanent existence, permanent belonging. This desire is in all the great poets, in all the great writers, and all the great male minds. It's the characteristic of masculinity, I think, this desire for greatness, this desire for permanence."

David: "You don't think this is in women?"

Kevin: "To the extent that women are masculine they have the desire for perfection. I think all human minds are composed of both masculine and feminine. Men, obviously, are mostly masculine and that's why we use the word 'masculine'. Women are mainly feminine. Men have a large feminine component in them - I'd say maybe twenty or thirty percent feminine. Women also have a masculine component, but it probably would only be in the order of one or half a percent. What do you make of that psychology, Dan?"

Dan: "What's the point?"

Kevin: "Well, if we're going to encourage people to become true atheists - to have actual knowledge of God - they have to desire greatness. They have to desire something of permanent value and the thing that is of permanent value is Truth. There is nothing of greater permanence than Truth itself. This requires great courage to overcome all of our weaknesses and attachments. If we define the feminine as the part of the mind which is content in the moment, which is content with connectedness with the earth - like the wombat - and if we define the masculine as the striving for perfection and for power, then we have to encourage the masculine in all people. In both men and women, we have to encourage the masculine. Do you see how I think it's of value now?"

Dan: "Yeah, I agree."

David: "Immensely popular doctrine too! I mean, we're living in an age where the masculine is totally devalued."

Kevin: "We were looking at a book the other day, actually. It was on the shelves in *The American Bookstore* and I think the actual title of it was, 'Men Cost Too Much'. Was that it?"

David: "Something like that."

Kevin: "And one of the arguments on the back cover of the book was, 'Men drive oil tankers into rocks in ecologically sensitive

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

areas'. I mean, this is the kind of thing that's happening to the masculine in our age."

Dan: "Yes, men cost too much, but eighty percent of all commercial floor space is taken up precisely for the benefit of women."

Kevin: "But men own the shops! That's a convincing argument."

Dan: "This idea that we should value the masculine is important in the context of Truth, because searching for Truth involves risks. It involves abandoning security. It involves abandoning your attachment to happiness - which is a very, very important one. I have to admit I don't see much in the feminine - I don't see *anything* in the feminine, actually - which leads me to think the feminine has any scope for those things because it's precisely security and happiness that they crave. And it's risk-taking and that striving which is absolutely imperative for pursuing wisdom. It's a lot of risk - particularly emotionally - in abandoning your attachments to your beliefs. And pursuing truth is about abandoning all these things."

Kevin: "You know, a lot of women would say that men don't have a lot of courage at all. They say that men are very weak and lack all of these characteristics that we're attributing to the masculine mind. They don't see these lofty characteristics in any of their male companions at all. Of course, not having those characteristics themselves to any large extent, you wouldn't expect women to see them. So we just have to make the point that these lofty masculine things that we're talking about - a person has to *have* them to begin with to be able to recognize their existence."

Dan: "Look, I agree. But I think women are entitled to feel that those things don't exist in the average man, because by and large they don't."

David: "Oh, but they do in seed. They do deep down."

Dan: "Certainly. Absolutely, yeah."

David: "I certainly don't think many women recognize that sort of potential for greatness. They just concentrate on all the negative aspects of masculine behaviour. But men are always doing things. They're always creating things, you know. They created civilization, for example. They created all the scientific inventions. They also create the wars and the murders and so forth. So they're the doers. And because men do some bad

things - and admittedly they do - women want to discard the whole masculine endeavour. The whole thing is regarded as worthless, because sometimes it effects women in a negative fashion. It's really stupid."

Kevin: "Yeah, a lot of it's to do with the fact that a lot of the frontiers which existed in the past no longer exist."

David: "That's a big one, I think."

Kevin: "In the past, men had to protect women. Today, well, we've got the police force - which is not exactly the same as men. It's just like paying robots to do some work for you, like paying some slaves. Men are no longer valued today as protectors, so we no longer have value anymore. Let's remember that more than fifty percent of the population are women, and we live in a democracy. So, if the majority don't value what men have to offer ..."

David: "That's right. We've almost done too good a job of it, haven't we? We've created a society that's ordered; we've got the law. I myself rarely face life-threatening situations. This is completely different to our ancestors who had all sorts of life-threatening situations - floods, animals and everything - and the men evolved to protect and to defend the women and children from all these life-threatening situations. But because they no longer exist, men have no value. And it's also to do with the frontiers, as you were saying. Where are the frontiers now? It's still going to be quite a few decades, or even centuries, before we start venturing out into space. We live in a world which is just totally concreted and explored. Men don't see any reason to do anything great because there is no real challenge, no real masculine challenge anymore."

Dan: "Well, yeah. Men in a certain respect have almost made themselves obsolete, but it's possible that some good may come of this because there is one frontier which is still left, and that's the frontier of wisdom. So even if there are no other frontiers left for men, then there is still that one. Unfortunately, women don't value it, because they assume that they are already wise - most of them, in my experience - and so they don't push men to pursue that frontier."

David: "Well, that's right. Not many men pursue truth. It's the one frontier, as you said, and so in order to halt this slide towards more and more femininity in the world, in order to

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

get the masculine juices going, it has to be towards Truth, because that's the only frontier left. I just can't see that happening. I look into the future and I see ... it's a bit like those grasshoppers which, just after they finish copulating, the female just gobbles up the male. He's done his job and ... that's the future I see as our society becomes more and more feminine. It's like ... get rid of the men - Pah! Who needs them!"

Kevin: "Yeah, the main purpose of life is to produce children."

David: "Of course! Anyway, we're nearing the end, so I'd just like to remind our listeners that we have tapes of our shows for sale. If you're interested in any of our past shows ... this is what - our seventh show? The first one was with academic philosophers where we discussed life and death and--"

Kevin: "Ultimate Truth."

David: "Ultimate Truth. Funny one, that. That was quite an interesting discussion. What was the next one? Zen. A couple of Zen exponents, one of them a Zen monk, and we were talking about Buddhism, basically. The third one was with some Anglican Priests, which has to be heard to be believed. Then we had a couple of physicists, which I thought was a very good conversation. It was very clear, dealing mainly with quantum physics and whether things can arise caused or uncaused, and what science can tell us

about these things. And then after that we had Carl Wieland who everybody thought licked us totally."

Kevin: "Who is the Creation Scientist?"

David: "The Creation Scientist, yes."

Kevin: "So-called."

David: "Last week was also a very interesting conversation. We had an authorized Zen Master from Canada."

Kevin: "Who claimed not to be a Master."

David: "That's right, yes. So, all of these conversations, all of these shows are on tape and if you're interested just give the station a ring, or you can contact us at our address: P.O. Box 207, St. Lucia, 4067. That's P.O. Box 207, St. Lucia, 4067. And you can write to us about anything, if you want to. If you're interested in getting to know us or anything like that just drop us a line at that post box."

Kevin: "We also want some feminists to come into the station to do a program with us about the psychology of men and women."

David: "Right. So, anybody out there who's willing for a challenge, give us a ring. Alright, thanks Danny, interesting conversation. We'll probably have you on again some time in the future."

Dan: "I look forward to that."

David: "Kevin and I will be back again next week."

Kevin: "Will do."

David: "Okay, see you later."⁵³

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

FEMINISM

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -
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Guests:

- Andrea Lanyon - Senior Research Assistant in Sociology at the University of Queensland.
- Leslie Jolly - Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Queensland

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

One of the more difficult and unpleasant tasks of the entire radio series involved trying to arrange a couple of feminists to come on to the program and discuss the psychology of the sexes with us. Who would have thought such a seemingly simple project could produce such a convoluted drama! We must have spoken to at least twenty feminists over the preceding few weeks, completely in vain. The most frequent response to our requests was: "Sorry, I'm past that stage now [of discussing the fundamentals of male/female psychology]. I've moved on to other things". I'm not joking. It seems that feminists are now so advanced that the mere effort of understanding reality is beneath them!

All we wanted to do was to investigate the characteristics of masculinity and femininity, and determine the relative value of each, but the women I talked to clearly viewed such a proposal with extreme loathing, possibly placing it on a par with rape.

*Of course, many of them were put off by the fact that a program, called *The Hour of Judgment*, was run by a couple of men. One of them, for example, a Christian feminist, initially expressed some interest in appearing on the program but wouldn't commit herself until she had listened to an episode. She duly tuned in the following Sunday evening, only to promptly phone the station the very next morning and declare her emphatic refusal. When I asked her the reason for this, she replied, "I don't think I would be comfortable on a program like yours. I thought it was going to be a discussion program. You set yourselves up as judge and jury, did you know that? Sorry, but I don't like its adversarial element." After hearing this repeatedly from a number of leading femi-*

nists, I began to despair over the possibility that we would never get any women onto the program at all.

*Eventually, we resorted to asking a friend of ours, Sue Hindmarsh, for help in finding some feminists for us, and it was due to her patient coaxing skills - namely two hours whispering sweet praises and encouragements on the phone to Andrea Lanyon - which finally got us the breakthrough. (See *THE NATURE OF WOMAN* and *SEXUAL FANTASY* for Sue's subsequent appearances in the series.)*

Andrea Lanyon arrived at the studio on Sunday with her colleague, Leslie Jolly, and I must confess the very sight of them undid me. I very rarely talk to women in any capacity, let alone concerning something as important as philosophy, and here I was expected to take part in an hour's conversation with, not one, but two of them! And what made it worse was that, while Leslie was older and more dignified, Andrea happened to be one of the most lovely specimens of womanhood I had ever laid eyes upon!

Imagine my turmoil! And it was not lessened when Kevin wandered off to do something else, leaving me with the insurmountable task of entertaining our guests. What was I to do? Engage them in conversation? I asked Andrea what she did at the university, and she said, "I study animy". I asked what animy was, and she said, "Normlessness" ... Well! I was a blithering mess by this time, I can tell you! Indeed, the one thing which was going through my mind as we trundled off into the recording studio was the hope that Kevin would be able to carry the show for the both of us.

D. Q

David: "Well, we have success at last! After weeks and months of trying fruitlessly to get women to come onto the program, we have tonight, live in the studio, two women prepared to pick up the challenge and look closely with us at the psychology of the sexes. Hello everyone, I'm David Quinn, with

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

me is Kevin Solway, and this is *The Hour of Judgment*. Now it is obvious that coming to a thorough understanding of human psychology is extremely important if we, as individuals, and as a society, are going to take control of our lives. After all, it is our psychology which drives everything we do. Now, by psychology, I don't necessarily mean what the academics refer to as psychology, but our *character*, our values, our beliefs, our world views, our attachments. It is these things which literally determine what we become in our lives. And central to any understanding of human psychology, I believe, is the understanding of male and female psychology. Because to me, the sexes are very different to one another. The masculine mentality is entirely different to the feminine mentality ... or is it? This is the issue we will explore tonight. It is an issue, I might add, which is usually completely avoided in our society. It seems that not many people want to come to grips with what is the masculine and what is the feminine and what it means for society. But tonight we're going to break these taboos and look fearlessly into the whole thing. And we have with us, to help us in this, Andrea Lanyon, who is a senior research assistant at the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Queensland, and Leslie Jolly, who is a Lecturer in Anthropology, also at the University of Queensland. Welcome to both of you, and thanks for coming in. And also welcome to Kevin Solway, who is our resident expert, as always."

Kevin: "I'm still here."

David: "Now, Andrea and Leslie, to start off, would you call yourselves feminists? Is that a term you use to describe yourself, Leslie?"

Leslie: "It's a term I'd more often hear used about me than I'd be inclined to use myself. It's not very important to me what I label myself, but I guess other people would call me a feminist, yes."

David: "So you're uncomfortable with this term?"

Leslie: "Well, it can mean so many things."

David: "What does it mean to you personally?"

Leslie: "To me, it means an interest in looking at power differentials between men

and women, and working, in my working life, to equalize those power differentials."

David: "And what about yourself, Andrea?"

Andrea: "Well, I do say I'm in a similar boat to Leslie, in that I know that lots of people think I'm a feminist. But perhaps I'm a little different to Leslie because I'm quite happy for them to think that I'm a feminist. I'm quite happy with the label. I recognize, as Leslie does, that there are certainly, sometimes, problems with the unified indication of feminism and being a 'feminist', but I consider myself a feminist because I'm concerned with equalizing the power differentials between man and woman - particularly in terms of emancipatory politics - from a female perspective."

David: "So you take the basic view of all feminists, I imagine - the basic premise that all women have been oppressed over the centuries by men, or the patriarchal system, or whatever you like to call it, and it's only now that this is changing. Is this your basic view?"

Andrea: "Well, my view is perhaps a little bit different because I know from my scant reading of history that there have certainly been particular instances in humankind's past where women have had perhaps more power in a variety of areas of life than they do today. I'm thinking, in particular, of times in early Celtic existence when Goddess religions were very strong. Women were consulted in terms of important things that were going on in life and in society. So I don't take a blanket approach and say that women have been oppressed in all places at all times. But I think that certainly for me, and for my mother, and for her mother, that's the history from which my knowledge of women's oppression comes from. And it's my concern in redressing those sorts of issues."

Kevin: "Perhaps we could have a look at this issue of power. Now, traditionally, power is seen to be a masculine thing. And some women today are claiming that they want power. Do you see this as a masculine trait in women?"

Leslie: "I think you have to ask power for what?"

Kevin: "Well, exactly."

Leslie: "Just as you can't generalize about oppression in all times and all places, I'd like

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

to add to what Andrea has said, that not only is it historically impossible to say that women have always been oppressed by men, but cross-culturally you can't say that women are oppressed. People have power in context - in social context. Sometimes it's women that have it, and sometimes it's men that have it, and sometimes the power that they have is a different kind of power, used for different ends."

Kevin: "Yes, well, in today's society women have a lot of sexual power. I mean, we only have to turn on the television and look at the advertising, or look at the magazines, and it's full of women's sexual power--"

Leslie: "Just be a bit more explicit. What do you mean by sexual power?"

Kevin: "Well, literally the power women have over men as regards sex. The power women have to modify men's behaviour."

Leslie: "And you think men don't have that over women?"

Kevin: "Well, I'm not saying that. I'm saying that women today do have a strong sexual power."

Leslie: "I think the sexes have a sexual attraction for each other, and we both do things to maximize that attraction."

Andrea: "Or minimize it."

Leslie: "Or minimize it, as the case may be ... on occasion."

Kevin: "Speaking for myself, I know that I have a very strong desire for power, but that power is more of an intellectual power - it's a power of understanding, a power of knowledge - a knowledge of Ultimate Truth, a knowledge of absolutes. So I suppose some people would regard me to be an extreme egotist, because I want to know *everything*. I want to know what is ultimately true - what is permanently, absolutely true. I'm not interested in what may be true today and not true tomorrow. For example, science doesn't interest me hardly at all, because it's a temporary sort of knowledge - it's an incomplete knowledge. So this is a certain type of power which men, or some men down through the centuries, have sought for. All the great philosophers, all the great sages that I know of, are men. Not only are they men but they're masculine men. They desire absolutes; they're not interested in relative things."

Leslie: "Are we talking Aristotle here, or are we talking Hitler?"

Kevin: "Well, *all* of the great men, who have achieved great things - whether they be great bad things or great good things; whatever has been achieved of enormity - has been done by men who value some sort of absolute, who desire some sort of permanence."

David: "This is idealism, isn't it."

Kevin: "Yes. They're not men of fashion. They're men striving for permanence. So this is a particular kind of power that men strive for, which you see very rarely among women, who have a different sort of power. Perhaps we could examine this issue of masculinity and femininity within the human individual. Have either of you thought about this affair very much?"

Andrea: "I suppose, Kevin ... and perhaps we'll have some differences in perspective in relation to what you've said, because one of the things which I think about ... what you've said ... my first thought, as a feminist is, yes, there have been a lot of very great male philosophers who have fought for this particular sort of truth - intellectual power. But I also think about the myriad of women who have probably been interested in those sorts of things as well - in terms of looking into the meaning of life, looking into what is ultimate truth and permanent truth, if you want to put it into those terms - but we've not gotten to know about them. So that's one thing that I think about. I don't think in terms of dichotomising between men who have thought about these sorts of things, and women who haven't."

Kevin: "Well, I'm wondering whether this is true. Because I know that I find if I meet *any* person who has a desire for the absolute, for some genuine knowledge - whether they be man or woman - I automatically have a great deal of respect for them, because people like that are so rare. And I think the same thing would be true for all history. If there were women who had these genuine desires ... and remembering that if the desire is there, the understanding and the result will also be there, because anyone who genuinely seeks this higher knowledge attains to it ... so if there were women who had genuinely sought this higher knowledge they would have attained to it, and they would have been respected."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Leslie: "And so they have! Generations of mothers in the Catholic Church--"

Andrea: "Yes!"

Kevin: "You're joking, aren't you?"

Leslie: "No, I'm most definitely not."

Kevin: "The Catholic Church ... ?"

Leslie: "Any Church. It seems to me that what you're talking about here is something which goes beyond intellectualizing capacity - that if you can attain it without any special intellectual equipment, as you seem to be saying, it gets into the realm of faith."

Kevin: "Well, no. Intellectual equipment is definitely necessary for higher knowledge."

Leslie: "But you just said desire was enough."

Kevin: "Yes, desire for the intellectual understanding is what I mean. There must be a desire to use the intellect. If there's no desire to use the intellect, then nothing's achieved - obviously. I mean, no matter what kind of experience a person might have, no matter what kind of so-called "spiritual experience" they have, if there's no reason there to verify the experience or to interpret the meaning of it, then there's nothing. So intellect is absolutely essential, and it seems to me that this power of intellect is a very very masculine thing. And in the past, when we have seen women who have attempted to follow this intellectual path, there hasn't been any fruits. You don't find the great female philosophers, the great female thinkers, in this realm of the absolute."

Leslie: "Wasn't it Hypatia who was stoned to death for being a philosopher? Women have learned not to do these things. Women have learned to use their intellectual capacity for other ends. I would dispute with you the existence of an absolute, single, truth."

Andrea: "Right."

Kevin: "On what grounds?"

Leslie: "On the grounds that I see all knowledge as constructed in interaction with other human beings in society, because of the kind of social beings we are."

Kevin: "And is *this* an absolute truth?"

Leslie: "... oh, you've got me there. It depends what you mean by absolute. I think it's a generally true fact about the human species."

Kevin: "Yes, but truth is either relative or it's absolute. It's got to be one or the other. If we say it's an absolute truth that all

knowledge is relative, well then, we still have an absolute truth."

Leslie: "Well, let's argue from that point then. Can you accept that position?"

Kevin: "Well ..."

David: "As a stepping stone."

Kevin: "As a stepping stone, yes."

David: "It has logical implications."

Leslie: "And what are they?"

David: "Well, if everything is relative, then it means that things can only exist relative to other things. So therefore nothing can really exist in its own right."

Andrea: "Well, I'm no philosopher, and I come to this discussion as a sociologist. I haven't read all the great philosophers. So, in that respect, there's a difference in terms of the power, if you like, that exist here, because I just don't have that sort of knowledge. But in terms of talking about things in relativity to one another, and in terms of absolutes, you would be hard-pressed ever to convince me that masculinity and femininity are absolutes. I am absolutely convinced that they are relative."

Leslie: "One is relative to the other."

Andrea: "Masculinity would not exist without femininity."

Leslie: "And perhaps stages in between. In other cultures in the world you don't just have two genders, you might have three or four. These things are performed, rather than being inborn."

Kevin: "Masculinity and femininity are just words that we stick on certain types of behaviour. So all people, generally speaking, have both masculine and feminine traits."

Leslie: "Oh, well, that's a different argument altogether."

Kevin: "Well, this is what I'm really speaking about - masculinity and femininity."

Leslie: "I have a very masculine side. It makes me want to get in there and argue!"

Kevin: "I think you have ... more than most women."

Leslie: "Maybe you don't know many University women."

Kevin: "But from my observation - to spice things up a little bit - men have quite a large portion of femininity in them. That's why you find a lot of men who are cross-dressers, and who want to change into women physically."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Leslie: "There are lots of men who are exceptionally good mothers."

Kevin: "Right, mainly because our mothers were our main role model in our early years of life. I know when I was a very young child, people would ask me what I wanted to do when I grew up, and I told them I wanted to be a mother ... because I didn't know anything else. It was the only thing I knew, it was the only thing I felt comfortable with. So men do have a large component of femininity in them ... also because femininity is very easy and comfortable - it's a comfortable lifestyle."

Leslie: "It depends how permanent it is, probably."

Kevin: "But women, I would say, only have a very, very small component of masculinity in them. I'd say in the order of one or two percent - maybe a little bit more in some women like Camille Paglia, who would almost make the grade as a man, I think."

Leslie: "As an honorary man, she would be pleased."

Kevin: "I think she'd be proud of that. I think she sees herself as a bit of a man as well. So both masculinity and femininity do definitely exist, but I like to draw a sharp distinction, for purposes of discussion, between masculinity and femininity. So I say that the idealistic type of striving, whether it be that of Hitler or the Buddha, is masculine - this striving for absolute perfection and permanence - even though it might be in some crude way. And the desire for comfort, and living in the present, acceptance, passivity, the pleasure of just going with the flow, being an observer--"

Leslie: "I think they're all behaviours that you learn."

Kevin: "But I would describe those as feminine behaviour."

Leslie: "But you still learn them. And an organism of either biological sex can learn those behaviours."

David: "Agreed."

Andrea: "I disagree. I mean, in terms of you saying that this striving, in terms of longer-term effects and having permanence over and above, if that's what you're talking about, and saying that this is a particularly masculine trait - that, if I remember correctly, women only have one to two percent masculine trait ... I think about mothers, I think

about women in the family, who strive, who work really hard, and who are not just living for the present - I mean, they're living for their family, they're living for the future, and striving and battling in ways very similar to this description you provided - and you call this masculinity!"

Kevin: "Well, this relates to an area you're probably familiar with, and it's the kind of work that women are skilled at."

Leslie: "You *learn* skills."

Kevin: "Yes. Now I saw some figures somewhere which show that in very boring - well, I won't call it boring - but in repetitive factory work women have been found to be more productive than men."

Andrea: "Yes."

Kevin: "And I put it to you that the reason is that men, being more idealistic, want to be a football hero or something, and they're not happy to be sitting at the assembly line doing something he regards to be boring."

Leslie: "Being less oriented towards the future and providing for the family, they'd rather be on the dole, maybe?"

Kevin: "Exactly. Something more constructive. But the women, not having these ideals and goals, these grand goals for the future, are satisfied with this kind of work. Now I regard this as inferior behaviour. But, quite rightly, you say that this behaviour is learned."

Andrea: "Right, and they may do the work. But they may not be satisfied with the work. I mean, one of the things that I would say to you, as a sociologist, and in relation to the comments you, David, made in introducing the program, is that I don't think that we're taking social structures into account sufficiently, and how they limit one's behaviour, one's character, and one's psychology."

Kevin: "Let's look at how these social structures got here. I know for myself that if there are some social structures existing that I personally don't like, then I will go out of my way to knock down those structures. It's one of the purposes of this program to do just that. If there are things happening in society which we don't like, then we change them. That's the way *men* do things."

Andrea: "And that's the way women do things as well!"

Leslie: "It's surely the way feminists do things."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Andrea: "That's right."

Kevin: "Let's hope so."

Andrea: "I think that's a little negative, because if you look at the sorts of evidence that exist of women striving - of feminists, of people who would not call themselves feminists but perhaps Leslie and I might call them feminists or emancipatory women in history, women who have struggled and strived to get the vote."

Leslie: "To do all sorts of things. And apart from that level of activity, there is the domestic everyday tedium level of activity, where I think you see women doing a lot of things, but they don't tend, for various social reasons, to organize themselves. So they're not very much of a force, it seems to me, in most trade unions, for instance. But I've known lots of women in work situations who actually go out of their way to make the changes they see are necessary. If that means doing, right I'll do it *now* - I don't make a theory about it, I don't go out and make a program about it, I just do it."

David: "You were talking, Andrea, about the women in the suffrage movement, for example. Well, I think that to the degree that they're actually striving to change things, that would be masculine. It would be the masculine component in them that is striving and taking responsibility to make changes. But what I see in the feminist movement, generally, this is not the case. It's more like a fashion. And it's very much the case that no woman wants to take responsibility for their actions. As an example, we've been trying to invite women on to this program for a number of weeks, and the general response has been, or the general feeling has been, that, 'We're past the idea of discussing the basic issues of men and women. We're past that. We've got other things to do'. So when it comes to justifying and thinking about why one does what one does - you know, why become a feminist, why pursue a particular cause - women are reluctant to own up to it, and they pass the buck. This is what I've found personally. Now when I've invited men on to the program to defend, say, why they are Christians or why they're Buddhists, they understand completely what you mean."

Leslie: "Did you ask women to answer those questions too?"

David: "Yes."

Leslie: "And they come in and talk about that?"

David: "Occasionally. But concerning the issue of feminism, it's a very wide sweeping movement; it has a lot of effects; it's changing our society and it's affecting everybody's lives, so it's a very important issue. It's bigger than Christianity, for example, in terms of social change--"

Andrea: "And you know, I absolutely take *offence* to your statement that it's a fashion. I mean, it's not something I wear as a fashion statement. It's something that I live, as a way of looking at things."

Leslie: "We both built our careers on it for one thing."

Kevin: "But you can see how men like ourselves can be a bit sceptical, though. Because it's well-known that women are far more suggestible than men are."

Leslie: "Who knows this fact?"

Kevin: "Well, actually this is one of the few things which academic psychology has proven beyond any doubt - through experiments in hypnotism and suggestibility. Women are markedly more suggestible. You can tell groups of people, men and women, completely crazy things; a large number of men will believe it, but a far greater number of women will believe it. I mean, obviously it's the way they've been brought up--"

Andrea: "Exactly."

Kevin: "We'll discuss how much of it is genetic as well sometime during the program - because genetics has obviously got something to do with it."

Leslie: "We're not geneticists either, you should know."

David: "But I suppose that by 'fashion' I'm talking about something deeper than what you're thinking of, Andrea."

Andrea: "It did come across that way, but I was just saying--"

David: "I must say that I have a very lofty concept of 'unfashionable'. I mean, someone who is not fashionable has thought out, to the very bottom, these absolutes which were mentioned before. So he's actually thought out his or her position on what is good, and what is true. He has actually come to an individual understanding and reached that ultimate certainty. Now if you haven't reached that then you're prone to fashions. So if women don't value this absolute

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

knowledge, and I meet very few women who do, then how can they not be prone to fashions? How can you not be prone to them if you're not valuing the individual understanding of reality?"

Leslie: "I think you're talking about a moral code here - that you are congratulating yourself on having attained a moral code which works for you. But suppose five years down the track your circumstances change in such a way that your moral code needs re-examination, as it no longer fits the circumstances - are you able to do that? Or are you too absolute about it? For a feminist would say that this is the down-side of the kinds of qualities which you are labelling "masculine", for want of a better word. They tend to get hide-bound. You not only get your aristocracies, but you also get your Hitlers."

Kevin: "Yes, well, my purpose in life the survival of wisdom. So, you see, all my values and my choices pivot on this goal. So whatever I do, I ask myself, 'Is this conducive to the survival of wisdom?' And by wisdom I mean a knowledge of Ultimate Truth. So this is not going to change five years down the track, no matter what happens - unless I die or something. I will always have the same values for as long as I live, from now on, and I'll care only about the survival of wisdom. But the more feminine way of looking at life is to say, 'Well, what are the forces operating on me in this society? I will adjust myself according to the forces of my family, the forces of my employers, the forces of the expectations of other women--'"

David: "That's right, you need that strong purpose. If you don't have that strong purpose, then you're--"

Leslie: "By changed circumstances, I really had in mind global, environmental circumstances. Now the values of the elders that led us to the environmental crisis which the world is in today really need re-examination."

Andrea: "Right."

Leslie: "They would have held them as absolute truth. There are people in Papua New Guinea who hunt dugong. They have hunted dugong for millennia. They used to go out in little canoes with bamboo harpoons, which is extremely dangerous as the dugong is a big animal, and it's hard to do. They prized especially the female pregnant dugong. Now, environmentally this is terrible, but from the

point of view of their society they got more fat, more calorific intake, all that. Along come dinghies, outboards, rifles, and all of a sudden they can take a whole lot more dugong than they could ever take before. People from the environmental agencies go out and try to explain to them that this really isn't such a good idea, and they say, 'But look, you white fellows with your Bible, it says here, and you've taught us to believe it as an absolute truth, that God said, 'The fruits of the earth are there for you to take'.'"

Kevin: "Well, I think we could then say that these men, or these masculine values, were a very poor sort of masculine values."

Leslie: "Oh, I see, so it's not masculinity that gives them absoluteness."

Kevin: "No. In their case, their absolute wasn't a true absolute."

Leslie: "But how do we work out what the true absolute is if we're not listening to both sides of the conversation?"

Andrea: "There has to be a period of growth too. You're talking globally. I'm thinking much more specifically about individual men and women in their daily life, and how they move through their life and grow as people, and grow in wisdom. And I firmly believe, and I don't know what sort of women you've been talking to in your life, David, but I know that a significant majority of the women and men that I associate with are very concerned with attaining wisdom and developing their knowledge and--"

David: "And is this their *conscious* goal? Is this what they live for, this attaining of wisdom?"

Leslie: "They would be very disinclined, perhaps, to express it in those terms, because they have a whole baggage behind them of Christianity and all those sorts of things that many people nowadays don't want to be associated with. But certainly our colleagues, the ones I like and the ones I don't like, I'd have to accuse them all of constantly seeking a better understanding and a better moral order."

Kevin: "Well, if a person wants to be well-liked and popular and earn a good income, they seek to have more wisdom, and they seek to appear to desire wisdom. Many people are like that. But to actually desire absolute, ultimate truth, requires one hundred percent devotion of a person's life. It's not an

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

easy thing to do. I'm thinking again of all the great wise men of the past, the great philosophers--"

Leslie: "Do you know how many hours lecturers at University put into it?"

Kevin: "Excuses, excuses!"

Leslie: "It is your whole life!"

Kevin: "... Yes, but University is not what I mean by wisdom. University is like a factory--"

Leslie: "It has some of those aspects, especially these days."

Kevin: "I mean, the knowledge you gain is not absolute. They are theories, hypotheses, history--"

Leslie: "That's how you arrive at truth."

Andrea: "Yes, if you don't develop your knowledge, Kevin, you."

Leslie: "It doesn't drop on you out of the sky!"

Andrea: "This is something we're going to disagree about. You do not come to an absolute by it just coming and hitting you on the head."

Leslie: "The Mormons believe that, of course."

David: "Well, *I* believe it actually."

[*Laughter*]

Andrea: "You must have met with some forces that I don't yet know about. But certainly in my understanding of the development of knowledge and the movement towards truth, and understanding what is true and what is not, is a developmental, processual one, and done in relation to other people."

David: "Yes, well, certainly in the case of University knowledge, and scientific knowledge, and all that sort of stuff, I agree totally. But making a breakthrough into ultimate understanding is something that you arrive at all at once - if you're lucky."

Kevin: "It's important to understand that Universities don't deal with absolutes. This is the important question--"

David: "They don't consciously strive for it, do they."

Kevin: "Ultimate truth has no place whatsoever in Universities, in any department. Even in the philosophy department, where if you expected to find anybody who was interested in absolutes it would be there ... but there's nobody. There's nobody in the philosophy department interested in ultimate truth!

Perhaps, you might say, the religious studies department? Maybe someone in the religious studies department is interested in absolute truth? And again you'd be wrong."

Andrea: "Well, I just think that we will have to accept that we differ on this point, otherwise the conversation will just stagnate somewhat. Because otherwise we're not going to be able to come from one position in relation to another, because I disagree. Because I have an inkling ... well, I know what you're trying to say ..."

Kevin: "Well, obviously, you must have some concept of what ultimates must be, or absolute truths. What would you conceive to be an absolute truth that would be arrived at through University knowledge?"

Andrea: "Well, I think an absolute truth - and maybe I'm jumping into a big abyss here - but an absolute truth which I hold to, as a sociologist, is that this whole idea of male psychology and female psychology, the whole idea that there are these innate - and I'm not suggesting you believe this, because I don't quite know yet, because I'm not quite sure where you're coming from - but certainly this innate male and innate female traits, characteristics, behaviour, is just a load of bunkum. It's just totally unfounded."

Kevin: "Well, obviously, everything comes from somewhere. Nothing in the universe is actually innate. Everything has causes, doesn't it. This microphone on the table in front of me isn't innately a microphone. Something has made it a microphone, and it's the same with everything in life."

Leslie: "Exactly. We're all made men and women."

Kevin: "So let's move on to the question of what actually makes men and women, and what kind of role our genetic make-up has. Now I find it interesting that all through time men have had similar interests: war, sport - they're very similar - philosophy, violence--"

Leslie: "So that's where being a man comes from - war, sport, violence ... ?"

Kevin: "In all cultures, men have been interested in these similar things."

Leslie: "I don't think you can say that - not for all cultures."

David: "At least you could say that for the dominant, successful cultures."

Andrea & Leslie (together): "How do you measure success!?"

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "Survival."

David: "Yes, survival, dominance, territory."

Leslie: "Well, if you train people to war then that becomes your measure. And yes, you can train people to go out and kill the neighbours. If that's your idea of success, then yes, I have to agree with you, it's masculine."

Kevin: "Well, looking at it from a scientific point of view, in evolutionary terms now--"

Leslie: "Evolutionary terms take into account the reproduction of the species, and there is a very strong argument that in human evolution the driving force was not the male's ability to fight the people next door, it was not the male's ability to go out and hunt big animals, it was the female's ability to pick a mate who would be properly nurturant of her offspring, so that she could raise them. Given her biology, she's not going to have very many and they are going to be widely spaced, and she has to raise them for a long time, through a long childhood. Those are the successful traits of the human species - the nurturant traits, not violent ones."

Kevin: "But its interesting that there's a large gap between the other apes on the planet which are alive today - the chimpanzees and so on - and us. And there are no living--"

Leslie: "There's not that much difference. We share ninety- seven percent of our DNA with the chimps."

Kevin: "Still, a few genes difference can make a big difference in the animal."

Leslie: "Obviously, though probably less than we think."

Kevin: "And the reason why there are no intermediate forms alive today is probably because we jolly well killed them! They may have been competing for our females, or competing for our resources, or whatever the reason, so just for fun we decided to wipe them out."

Leslie: "Not for fun, but for survival."

Kevin: "Yes, looking at it from evolutionary terms, survival, but from the individual's point of view they may have done it for fun."

Leslie: "I don't know how you can speculate on that."

Kevin: "And I also have a theory that many women find this trait of behaviour in

men, whether they know it consciously or not, attractive."

Leslie: "It's a marker of masculinity. As we said at the beginning, we're set up to be attractive to each other."

Kevin: "Yes, but not only that. If a man is violent, it means he's a better protector in a way. This was more valid in the past where protection was sometimes necessary--"

David: "It's a form of nurturing."

Kevin: "Yes, it's a form of nurturing. A man was a better carer and protector if he was big, strong, and dangerous."

Leslie: "Well, amongst the higher apes, the big, strong, dangerous bloke will sometimes get to be top male because of violence against other males, but the females don't buy into that very much. And the females are looking for mates who aren't going to be violent. When a new top male takes over a baboon troupe he eats the children of the other baboon males, so that he - so the theory goes - passes on his own genes rather than somebody else's. Amongst the apes that doesn't happen, because we can't survive as a species with that degree of violence."

Kevin: "Right, but I'm slowly moving towards the reasons why there would be a large genetic difference between men and women."

Leslie: "I doubt that there is ... it's just one chromosome."

Kevin: "It doesn't matter how few genes are different. I mean, just one gene difference, early on in the development of the human organism, can have very drastic effects on the eventual outcome--"

Leslie: "You can have red hair instead of black hair; you can have a penis instead of a ..."

Andrea & Leslie (together): "... vagina!"

Kevin: "A brain or no brain."

Leslie: "Well, no brain hardly makes you viable ... although in our case ..."

Kevin: "One gene can make a big difference. So that argument about the number of genes and chromosomes and so on is not really valid. But the fact is, in ordinary everyday life, men, masculine men, are attracted to feminine women. This is a basic rule of life. That is why when women want to look attractive to men they have the long silky hair--"

Leslie: "Because we've defined that as female!"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "Well, the men define it as what they find attractive."

Leslie: "But you learn what is attractive. It's not in your genes."

Kevin: "No, no."

Andrea: "I mean, this is such a contentious point. There are men who would find women who have hair like Leslie's ..."

Leslie: "Which is very short."

Kevin: "Feminine men--"

Andrea: "These masculine men which you're describing, using currently popular labels and categories ... I mean, especially now, fashion indicates that women with very short cropped hair are very, very pretty."

Leslie: "There can be a number of signals given off by that and you learn those in your particular society. In other societies the men go to immense lengths to make themselves big wigs, and they decorate themselves up, and if you want to be a very masculine, yet very attractive man, you've got to have the big hair."

Andrea: "It's socially constructed."

Kevin: "I think these are minor things, though."

Andrea: "No, they're not minor."

Leslie: "You brought it up."

Kevin: "No, the basic point is true. There are basic traits of masculinity and femininity. Those people who are strongly masculine in their minds are attracted, sexually and emotionally, to people who are feminine in their minds. So there's a strong selective pressure there."

Leslie: "Have you got figures on that? And how have you measured it?"

Kevin: "Well, it's difficult to measure. That's why they don't study it in Universities."

Leslie: "I suggest it's impossible."

Kevin: "But in everyday life, you only have to turn on the television and look at the advertising to see how women are portrayed--"

Leslie: "Advertising, precisely. They're aiming to sell something. They're teaching you what is good and what is desirable in a very overt way."

Kevin: "But they're giving people what they want as well."

Leslie: "Which was built by yesterday's ads."

Andrea: "And going back to your point previously about suggestibility, certainly there are a number of people, both men and women, who, for whatever consternation of social forces, accept these signals and it affects their behaviour in certain sites and certain places. So I firmly believe--"

Leslie: "The overlap in all those cases, I think, is as significant, if not more significant sometimes, than the differences."

Andrea: "Right."

Leslie: "You're saying there's an *absolute* difference, am I right?"

Kevin: "Well, no. There's an absolute difference between masculinity and femininity as I have described them. And in the case of men having a large degree of masculinity, they are going to seek the opposite of what they are in order to complete themselves."

Andrea: "Yes."

Kevin: "A man, with his masculinity, feels as though he's missing something - he's missing some of the joy and pleasure in life. He is going to seek a person who can fulfil--"

Leslie: "A person who has learned to live the way you are describing - either masculine or feminine behaviour - certainly is missing things."

Kevin: "Okay, now let's look at this selection pressure--"

Andrea: "Can I just ask something by point of clarification. When you were talking just then about masculine and feminine ... do you agree, or can you agree, that masculinity as we're discussing it is a social construction, and that in fact, if you think back to previous times, the sort of masculinity that we're talking about now is quite different? What was considered masculine, as opposed to feminine in, for instance, part of English history - and I'm not a historian--"

Kevin: "Those sort of things are passing fashions. But the basis of masculinity, which is idealism--"

David: "This is something you've made-up here, Kevin, about what is masculine and what is feminine."

Kevin: "Yes, I'm defining this idealistic striving as being masculine, as I stated at the beginning of the program."

Leslie: "Which we clearly indicated and disagreed with."

Kevin: "Yes ... and so all other appearances of masculinity--"

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Leslie: "How does violence relate, in your understanding, to the intellectual striving?"

Kevin: "Well, when a person strives for absolute perfection, and they fall short--"

Leslie: "Are we talking perfection here, or domination?"

Kevin: "Same thing."

Leslie: "Well, then your striving is in fact violence of its own - it's an intellectual violence. It's an inability to take a negotiator's position."

Kevin: "Let's take an example of a person who desires wisdom as opposed to ignorance. He has to destroy all the ignorance in his mind - and that's a form of violence, isn't it?"

Leslie: "It's a very strange metaphor."

Andrea: "Yes."

Kevin: "Whenever a person wants to achieve something great, something has to die. It may be ignorance--"

David: "Valuing is violence."

Kevin: "Yes, to value something, you devalue something else. If you value truth, then you devalue ignorance. So everything we do is a form of violence. But I want to get back to what I was saying a bit earlier: if masculinity is attracted to femininity, then there is a selection pressure there, not just in social conditioning, but there's also a genetic pressure as well. Because those women, for example, who have, genetically, brains less capable of doing abstract reasoning, will be found to be more attractive--"

Leslie: "How is this to be expressed, this lack of abstract reasoning capacity? I mean, I think there have been instances where women have this capacity and learn very early in life not to show it. So women are socialized - and it still happens in our high schools today - not to do maths and science, but to do history and languages, because that's more feminine, more suitable. It somehow fits with people's idea of what women should do. But it says nothing about women's innate capacity."

Andrea: "And their ability to abstractly reason."

Kevin: "That's right. This is a very shady area. It's in the area of empirical science where we can't say to what degree women are determined genetically. But nonetheless there are very strong forces which would suggest that if women were genetically inferior, as regards abstract reasoning, then they would have an evolutionary advantage because they

would be more attractive to men. They'd be less threatening, more easily suggestible, better slaves ... you know, a large number of men find this attractive. Men are attracted to young girls, for example."

Andrea: "Men also are attracted to young boys."

Kevin: "Exactly, they're suggestible, they're weak, they're--"

Leslie: "What we're talking about here isn't anything very directly related to genetics. We're talking about the exercise of ..."

Andrea & Leslie (together): "Power!"

Leslie: "Men are built into a structure we call patriarchy, which gives power to some men over other men, and to all men over women. And men seek to perpetuate that power structure. It's got nothing to do with physical, species perpetuation."

Andrea: "You have to accept that there are biological differences between men and women, and yes, there may be some genetic differences between men and women. We know that there are hormonal differences between men and women. But from my reading and my understanding and my consideration of this point, that *minor* difference is not going to be translated into the significant differences which we see in everyday life. Because what is the most important, what is the most powerful factor, in bringing about these configurations of relationships is socialization, social structure, and this issue of patriarchy."

David: "Well, okay, I think what Kevin is saying is that, looking at evolution from the broad perspective, we evolved in a tribal unit, and within this tribal unit the men evolved to do the defending and hunting. So this caused him to be genetically--"

Leslie: "That isn't true."

David: "But you can see the effects, at least in our culture, that the men are generally stronger, physically stronger, and--"

Kevin: "More prone to take risks."

Andrea & Leslie (together): "Risk behaviour is learned behaviour!"

Kevin: "You don't know that. It could be hormonal. Men may get more of a buzz out of taking risks."

Andrea: "It's learned behaviour."

Leslie: "Getting the buzz is going to be because the guys are going to think I'm really great, or whatever. It's learned behaviour."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "Even if it is genetic, a few years down the track we'll be able to change our genetics any way we want to. So if we wanted to eliminate certain traits, we could do that if we wanted to. So this whole idea of genetics doesn't mean--"

Leslie: "Who do you mean when you say 'we'? The question there is, who has the power to make the changes? And under patriarchy it's going to be men. What changes are they going to make? We see in America moves to implant foetuses in men's abdomens so that they can become mothers and things like that. What kinds of genetic changes are we looking at, and what do we want our society to look like down the track?"

Andrea: "And I think, too, positing feminism as male-bashing is a problem, because a lot of the feminists I know are not male-bashers. What their goal is is an emancipatory politics for women, and further on than that - thinking about what sort of world is going to be good for everybody - for men and for women. Right? And that follows on from this concern about genetics--"

David: "But if you haven't consciously thought out what kind of world ... I'm not sure that feminism knows what it ultimately wants, you know."

Kevin: "Feminism doesn't really even know what it is."

Leslie: "Well, that's one of these cases where you can't use the label feminism. Who do you mean 'doesn't know what they want'? I do!"

David: "Well, women who believe in this 'oppression' and 'patriarchy' - that they've been oppressed by patriarchy. You were saying before about the patriarchy, and all that sort of stuff. I don't really go along with that because there's different spheres of power, and women have their own power. They have a certain power over men. It's more emotional and sexual, whereas with men it's more direct - it's more physical and intellectual. So there are different spheres of power."

Andrea: "We would be the first to recognize that there are certain different spheres of power. We would also be the first to recognize that women have power in different sorts of situations. I mean, we began talking in those very terms. When I, for instance, talk about masculinity, I talk about hegemonic masculinity - what is the dominant form of

masculinity at this point in time. Recognising that there are different forms of masculinity competing for that dominance, and different forms of femininity - there's a hegemonic femininity as well - you have that diversity. But, when you look at, broadly, the situation in Australia, America, and Europe, when you look at the people who are in positions of power, in terms of making significant input into making changes in structures which affect daily life, men are in most positions, and currently very much ... I mean, you just have to look at the recent Labour politics and all that's going on there, and their supposed commitment--"

David: "You mean quotas and all that sort of thing?"

Andrea: "Yes, that's right."

Leslie: "Which they will never, ever honour. Because it's not in their interests to honour them."

David: "Well, you're dealing with politics there, which is a whole different kettle of fish, isn't it."

Andrea: "It's all part of it, though."

David: "Yes, but going years down the track ... What sort of world do we want? Now, ultimately, I am for women's liberation. There's no doubt about it. I want women to be totally liberated. But my concept of liberation is different from that of a lot of women. I see liberation as being liberation from false concepts, liberation from false attachments, liberation from--"

Kevin: "Ignorance."

David: "Yes, ignorance. But I don't see this in feminism. And I don't see anything in feminism that wants anything to do with being liberated."

Kevin: "Or with ultimate truth and ultimate knowledge."

Leslie: "I really would have to disagree very, very strongly. We're arguing here about what we understand knowledge and truth to be--"

Kevin: "Well, this is a good point. You were saying before, Andrea, how feminists are not necessarily anti-male ..."

Andrea: "Right."

Kevin: "But you have to look at that from the point of view of the male - as to whether the feminists are anti-male or not. I mean, I myself value what I call masculine values,

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

which is idealism and striving for absolute perfection--"

Leslie: "What I call domination."

Kevin: "Yes, I'm quite happy with the word 'domination', but in my sense of the meaning it's domination over ignorance. I want to dominate over my weaknesses. I don't want to have weaknesses at all! So that's a kind of ultimate domination - I want to destroy them completely."

Leslie: "But it isn't human to not have weaknesses at all."

Kevin: "I believe in evolution. I want to evolve into a superior form of human being."

Leslie: "It doesn't happen in one lifetime."

Kevin: "Well, this is the only one I've got, so it'll have to do. But I'm thinking these are the things I value - masculinity is what I value above all. And whenever men fail in the world it's because of their inadequacy, their failings of being masculine - they're not masculine enough, they're not strong enough to cope with what's dealt them. And when I look at feminism - even the strongest feminists: the Camille Paglias, the Germaine Greers, the Celia Greens, who I consider to be the most advanced feminists - they are doing *nothing* to help me, and in fact are actually destroying the things that I believe in and the things that I uphold. So feminism is most definitely destroying what I believe in, and is destructive to masculinity."

Leslie: "You're equating yourself with the whole of masculinity?"

Kevin: "Yes I am."

[Laughter]

Leslie: "Egoist."

Andrea: "And therein lies part of the problem, I think. But certainly I think that femi-

nism, and I don't know about yourself, but certainly feminism has to be deconstructive. There may have been some side-effects of feminist approaches which have not been anticipated, and which we would admit are perhaps negative in some respects. But there has to be a deconstruction of what is inappropriate, of what perpetuates inequality and injustice. And feminists have chosen to begin with women because nobody else has given a damn about them for a very long time. And they are learning to stand up for themselves. So that's one point. The next point is that I would disagree with you, David, about feminism's lack of clarity in terms of where it's going. There are, I think, getting back to my point about developing knowledge and all that sort of thing - that it's processual - certainly we must go through a period of trying to work out what is the best way to go. But definitely our goal is a better society, and a better existence, a better understanding of ourselves and one another, for both men and women. Would you agree?"

Leslie: "I agree, absolutely."

David: "Well, it sounds good. We agree with that too."

Leslie: "You were feminists and you never knew it!"

Kevin: "Well, I've always known I'm a feminist but when I tell women that they laugh in my face."

David: "Well, we're going to finish-up, I suppose. It's getting on time. Thanks Andrea and Leslie."

Leslie: "Thank you."

David: "And Kevin and I will be back next week. See you later."

Andrea: "Thank you very much."⁵⁴

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

THE NATURE OF WOMAN

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -

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27th August, 1995

Guest: Suzanne Hindmarsh

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

David: "Welcome to *The Hour of Judgment*. I'm David Quinn, and along side me is Kevin Solway. This is part of a series of programs which are dedicated to those of you out there who love to think and uncover great truths. Tonight we are going to pick up where we left off last week and delve even more deeply into the subject of women. As I've said in the past, the subject of women is an incredibly important one to come to grips with, for not only does it go to the very heart of human psychology, but it goes to the very heart of the spiritual path itself. Admittedly, it is a very difficult subject. It is profound, and requires years of dedicated, honest thinking to make any headway in it. I would say, if pushed, that the subject of woman is even more difficult to understand than understanding the nature of Reality itself. This probably explains why virtually everybody I meet has such fantastical delusions about women. I'd say that there would be very, very few people who have come to a thorough understanding of the subject - perhaps only half a dozen in all history - and all of these have been men. Which is no coincidence, since the understanding of women requires the *masculine* powers of penetrative analysis, honed and sharpened to a high degree, combined with a burning desire for Truth. So, tonight, Kevin and I are going to harness our own tremendous powers of reason upon this subject, and we'll be helped by a friend of ours, someone whom we've both known for years now, and who herself is capable of genuine thought - Suzanne Hindmarsh. Hello Sue."

Sue: "Good evening."

David: "And Kevin, hello to you."

Kevin: "Hello."

David: "Right. Sue, you were a feminist in a past life, in your earlier years. Can you tell us a little about that?"

Sue: "Yes. I think it is better to begin by telling you why I became a feminist in the first place. It was mainly due to boredom. I was bored with the normal female roles I had lived or had encountered, and so I joined a women's group at about the age of twenty-three. I remember thinking at the time that being a feminist had to be the highest a woman could go. It said to the world that you were: political, direct, difficult, boundary-pushing, passionate, strong, purposeful and courageous. But after two years of doing the rounds of rallies, forums, journal writing, petitions, lobbying governments and so on, I left. By then I knew that none of my ideas about feminism were correct."

David: "You were part of a group, weren't you?"

Sue: "Yes, W.I.L.P.F."

David: "And what's that?"

Sue: "Women's International League for Peace and Freedom."

David: "Right."

Sue: "It was mainly a peace group but it had feminist ideals behind it, backing it - backing up their dogma."

David: "And while you were there you fostered the normal feminist lines, I suppose?"

Sue: "Oh, yes."

David: "You believed that feminists were making sense?"

Sue: "Definitely. I believed that women were better, that they were good, that they were the ones who had to take care of things. I really believed that they were responsible human beings. I believed that they had to take more of a place in history, of which they hadn't been given an opportunity before. So I went in there very idealistic. The only trouble was it became very obvious to me in a very short period of time that really nobody else

* Kevin Solway and David Quinn, "The Nature of Woman," *The Hour of Judgment* [Radio Broadcast]. Brisbane Radio, 27 August 1995. Available at: <<https://www.theabsolute.net/minefield/j3.html>>

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

there cared. Nobody else was really interested in any of the higher ideals which I had - which were not just about saving the world but about changing the basic principles in the world. Call me naive, which I was, but I really believed these things. I believed that the women involved with the group had the same passion that I had. I left because I realized that that wasn't the case. More importantly, I left because my enthusiasm was getting drained by these women."

David: "Can you describe a bit more about these women? What motivated them, do you think?"

Sue: "What motivated them? Well, like I said, what motivated me initially was boredom, and what motivated them was also boredom. It offers a different lifestyle. We all know how women love to change their clothes; well, women also love to change their lifestyles - either to match their clothes or as a new accessory. I was like that. I wanted something better. The only problem was that once I had attained what I thought was the highest - namely, feminism - then there was nowhere else for me to go. After all, I'd been everywhere else - I'd been a 'wife', a 'mother', a 'girlfriend', a 'worker', a "career-minded person", an 'educated person' - I'd been everywhere else and so I thought feminism was *it*."

Kevin: "Sue, feminism is changing all the time; it's in a constant state of evolution. Even today there are many thousands of different kinds of independent feminisms. I am constantly being told that 'there is no one feminism'. So don't you think that perhaps feminism has evolved since the days you were involved in it? Obviously, it has grown up. It's become more mature. It knows what it is a lot more now than when you were involved in it."

Sue: "Ah well - no. Not at all. It's absolutely impossible for feminism to evolve in the way that you speak. If something is to evolve, it means it has to be attached to something in the first place. You have to actually value something."

David: "Have a goal, I suppose."

Sue: "Yes, have a goal, a purpose, some purposefulness. Feminism has no purpose. It has no goals. What you're seeing is a variation on the same old theme. What you've observed, Kevin, are simply new faces in

feminism - new colours, new designs, new patterns, new fashions."

Kevin: "But isn't it the goal of feminism - correct me if I'm wrong - to do anything you like and be respected for it? I mean, I've tried for many years to come to a determination of what feminism is and *that* is what it appears to me to be."

David: "This is what Naomi Wolf says, isn't it: that the highest virtue of the Third Wave of feminism - which is basically just modern feminism - is that it is continually changing."

Kevin: "And that this is its goal, to continually change. Which is just another way of saying that feminism is all about doing whatever you jolly well want to do, and being respected for it. But I ask, is this a goal? Could this be accurately described as a goal?"

David: "Well, it certainly couldn't be called evolution, because men have always known all along - all throughout the centuries - that women love to change their minds. I mean, women have always valued the right to change their opinions from day to day. There was a cartoon I saw the other day which said something like, 'I'm sorry, we're not ready yet. The wife's upstairs changing her mind.' And yet now we have the feminists praising this type of behaviour! It's what they've always had all their lives, and all throughout the centuries, and now they're saying that this is the highest of the feminism - changing your mind."

Kevin: "Okay, but what's wrong with this? Is there anything wrong with changing your mind everyday?"

Sue: "Well, there are a lot of things wrong with changing your mind everyday, especially if you are actually a person who values something. You know, I don't say to people nowadays that I'm an ex-feminist; I say that I'm the *only* feminist. I am the only female feminist on the planet. This is because I say that women do need to evolve - it's true - but that they can't keep going along the same track they're on now. They can't keep on doing the same things they're doing now. So it's not as if I don't actually think about women and want them to change - but under the circumstances, the way they are now, it's *impossible* for them to change. So when you talk about change in terms of ordinary, everyday women on the streets - whether they

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

be feminist or not - I tell you that they're not changing and that they never have changed."

Kevin: "Oh yes, but why do they need to change? Isn't it the case that it is men who are the ones who should change? Isn't it the case that the rest of the world should change? Women have been oppressed for thousands of years; they've been done many, many injustices. Shouldn't the world have to change and women just remain the way they are?"

Sue: "Well, first off, maybe we should clear up whether or not women have been oppressed. Let's look at the psychology of women. Don't you think that's a good place to start?"

Kevin: "It's a good start, yes."

Sue: "Okay. We look at what women are and we look at what men are. Firstly, women are submissive. We all know this, and we know that men are conquerors - they conquer and dominate. Now women, through their submission, have a form of conquering, but it's more hidden. This is one of the most important things to remember - that it's hidden. With men, it's direct. You can see it, and this is why people point fingers at men. Now the point is, because women's will to conquer and dominate is hidden, we call them innocent. In this way, they're protected. Men aren't."

David: "Well, that's right. I just can't believe that men think that they've been the oppressors, that women have been oppressed throughout the centuries. It's just a complete load of bunkum, because when you look at it, ninety-nine percent of women have been reasonably happy with their roles. I mean, we've evolved as a species - men and women together - and each sex have had their own roles and each has been relatively happy with their roles. It's just only in the last century or two that women have suddenly decided, 'Well, we want something else!' And men have gone, 'Oh, okay', and have totally accommodated them. They immediately went about changing the laws for them. Through the whole of this century, we've changed the whole of society to accommodate these new wishes of women."

Kevin: "Yes, but I have a nagging doubt about all of this. It sounds very reasonable, but - concerning this idea that women conquer by means of their submissiveness and their passivity - I don't know if I've ever met

a woman who actually *intelligently* goes about doing this. I get the impression that women are basically victims of circumstance. They behave in the same way they've been bought up by their parents. So they're innocent, aren't they? Aren't they purely innocent in everything they do? Should we expect women to be responsible for their actions?"

David: "Well, it depends if they're actually conscious, doesn't it."

Sue: "Yes, that's right."

David: "Are women conscious? Is this what you're getting at?"

Kevin: "Exactly."

David: "We expect men to be responsible achievers. When anything goes wrong we say that men are to blame. Are you saying that we should treat women in the same way? Is this what you're asking?"

Kevin: "Yes. Well--"

David: "Are women and men intrinsically the same in this way or are they fundamentally different in this way?"

Kevin: "Yes, that's right. I think most women would claim they're not responsible for what they do. They are victims, they would claim, and because they are not responsible we shouldn't treat them as responsible. And anyway, they tend to think that responsibility has no ultimate value; responsibility is just a male, egotistic vanity. Everybody should be the way women are - totally irresponsible, or responsibly irresponsible. You know what I mean? Why should we strive to be anything more than what women are?"

David: "I think the world would fall apart, wouldn't it? Women can be who they are - unconscious, irresponsible, very much like a child - because men have built the framework around them. There is a saying somewhere, 'Men create the spaces for women to flow'. If there was none of this framework, the flowing would drift off into a complete equilibrium or nothingness. So we need at least some people to actually be conscious, forward thinking and rational."

Sue: "Yes. Men create the spaces, as you say, for women to exist. It comes down to just this: How do women exist? What are they? Now I've thought of it in this way. If you take everything that a woman holds dear away from her: the kids, the husband, her clothes, her home, everything."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "Her career."

Sue: "Her career, yes, that's right, and her education. If you take all these things away from her, what have you got? Nothing. If you do the same to a man; if you take away his career, his car, whatever, he's still a man. There is still a man there. So it comes down to what it is exactly that you are looking at. When you look at a woman, what is she? Is there something inside there, like a personality, a character? Or is she just the stuff she lives through, like the husband and the kids and her lifestyle and career and whatever it may be? So when we're talking about whether women can change or develop - really, it's a non-question."

Kevin: "I'm trying to look at things from the point of view of women - if you'll forgive me - who make up more than fifty percent of the population. I don't think women do see anything special in men. As far as most women are concerned, if men lose their job, for example, or if they lose their women, then the man becomes nothing. The man is a non-entity as far as women are concerned if he doesn't have these things. This is obviously the way women think, and they assume that men are the same as them. Also, regarding this idea that women don't have consciousness ... you know, I think a lot of women would disagree on that, and the fact that they disagree would at least tend to imply that they do have some degree of consciousness - just by the fact that they're able to disagree with something."

David: "It comes down to defining what consciousness is. What do you mean by consciousness?"

Kevin: "Let's talk about consciousness. If it's the case that women don't have consciousness, and men do, then obviously there is no possible way for women to recognize the existence of consciousness in men. They can't do this if they don't have it themselves. So let's examine what consciousness actually is."

David: "Or this 'difference', as you were saying, Sue, between man and woman, that woman is nothing if everything is taken away from her whereas the man has something more. This is what we're getting down to, isn't it?"

Kevin: "What is this something more? What is it? Any ideas?"

David: "What do you think, Sue?"

Sue: "Yes. I think that it's a striving, a valuing, a sense of himself. He comes into the world and automatically he has to start making a way for himself. He doesn't just come into the world with his role set out for him; he actually has to strive to make a life for himself - he has to make himself. So he is forced to actually value things. He has a rigorous life. He has to be certain about what he wants in life. He has to make sure that when he takes on a wife or responsibilities, he's responsible for these to the end. If he wins something, he wins and succeeds; if he fails, he dies. For a woman, success and failure doesn't matter, even if she be a top politician - it doesn't matter because at bottom she's still *woman*. Therefore, she doesn't lay her life on the line. She doesn't risk anything. At no time does a woman risk losing herself because she's woman. She is everything. She is all over the place."

David: "You wouldn't say this about Margaret Thatcher or someone like that, would you?"

Sue: "I would say this about any woman."

David: "Oh, she's a man, surely!"

Kevin: "If any woman can be a man, she would be - apart from yourself, of course, Sue. What about Margaret Thatcher? What percentage of her is male? I'm famous for saying that men are on average about seventy percent male and thirty percent female (* That was when I was much more liberal with my use of the term 'masculine'. Today I would say that a man is only about 5% masculine - KS), and women are ninety-seven percent female and three percent male. What would the break-down be do you think for Margaret Thatcher? Would you think that she was fifty percent male?"

Sue: "No, no, I'd still say that she'd be in the lower reaches of two, maybe three, because--"

Kevin: "Oh! Come, surely five!"

Sue: "Oh, well, alright. What does it matter, really?"

Kevin: "Okay, very low."

Sue: "But also, what does it matter? Because what you're seeing there isn't masculinity; what you're seeing there is femininity *aping* a few masculine traits - very few indeed and not very well done either. The story is this: a women can use anything at her

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

disposal, and she has everything at her disposal. A man can't do this, because he'd get picked on and be told, 'I beg your pardon, you can't do that'. But a woman can use anything and get away with it. Margaret Thatcher does it beautifully - she looks like everybody's mother or aunt - and she is also capable of speaking in a masculine way. But what's behind it? What does she really risk? She ruined a whole country and she still got away with it. There's something wrong there."

Kevin: "Yes, I'm trying to picture that if a real man did behave the way Margaret Thatcher did, and dressed the way that she did, well, he wouldn't be regarded as a great man, would he?"

David: "Or if Margaret Thatcher was *more* manly, she would never have made it to the top of the Tory party."

Sue: "That's an important point."

David: "You seem to be saying, Sue, that even if women appear to be masculine, and if they conquer the world in a masculine way, the essential difference still remains. Even if the actions of men and women seem identical on the surface, there's some sort of difference and that is an inner ...?"

Sue: "An inner life."

David: "Yes."

Sue: "This is the consciousness we were talking about before."

Kevin: "So women are living their lives, basically, without true consciousness of what they're doing. So even when women are being masculine, or appearing to be masculine, they're actually not conscious. They're not fully responsible for what they're doing, and so they feel no need to be consistent in their behaviour. They can be masculine one moment, and feminine the next, for example, and all the while having no conscience about changing in this way. So, in other words, masculinity is just a fashion, or perhaps something to attract men's attention."

Sue: "Very much so. A new dress."

David: "It was Otto Weininger who said that if a woman does anything scientific, or masculine, it's because she's out to please a man - like her father, husband, or son. There is no pure motivation for knowledge in a woman."

Kevin: "I know, personally, that if there is nothing masculine in a woman, then there is

nothing attractive about her. It's difficult justifying being attracted to a woman if they have no noble, masculine characteristics. So those women who can put on the appearance of some form of nobility, or masculinity, can give a man a justification to approach her."

David: "That's an interesting point, actually. Think of the way that men and women interact, such as the man courting the woman. If men really did have true respect for women, if they really saw them as their true soul-mates, then it would be *inconceivable* that these men would treat women the way they currently do: buy them flowers--"

Kevin: "Have sex with them."

David: "And compliment them all the time about their attire - all that sort of stuff. It's a form of actual disrespect. It's saying, 'Woman, you are nothing, and so I can treat you in this fashion'."

Kevin: "Yes, the men are really saying, 'The fact that you are so easily flattered by my compliments means that you have no real substance.'"

Sue: "No integrity."

Kevin: "If a man met another man whom he respected he would never tell him, 'I love the way you've done your hair today'. It would never occur to a man to treat another man like that."

David: "Or to persuade by flowers."

Kevin: "It's funny that the very times when women feel honoured and feel that they're being respected by men are the very times that men are treating with the utmost disrespect."

David: "And vice-versa. Women do the same to men in their own way. When they're stroking the male ego, it is just a form of disrespect, and it is the same with all the games between the sexes which everybody loves to be involved in. I'm told that one of the faults of modern feminism is that it's lacking in the sexual side of things, that we should discover our sexual natures, because taking part in these sexual games is thrilling. But this sort of behaviour has a lot of consequences, not least of which it doesn't encourage anything noble in either sex."

Kevin: "Speaking about nobility, perhaps we can move on to the subject of genius. Now, Otto Weininger, one of the greatest heroes of all time whom very few people have ever heard of--"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "This is a German fellow about the end of last century."

Kevin: "Yes, he was a German philosopher who committed suicide at the age of only twenty-three, and who wrote a marvelous book called *Sex and Character*. In his book he breaks down the human character into male and female components and talks about how different individuals are composed of these different male and female components. He argues that masculinity is one and the same thing as genius. So a person is a genius to the degree that they are masculine. This doesn't necessarily mean that all men are geniuses. There is a certain threshold of masculinity above which a person can rightly call themselves a genius."

David: "Or a man."

Kevin: "Or a true man. And he says that it is impossible for there to ever be a female genius. This is not to say that a woman can never be a genius, but that a woman can never be female and a genius at the same time. And he also says that there can never be a scientific genius. So genius is not anything to do with the pettiness of ordinary human knowledge, of ordinary scientific knowledge, or of emotions and feelings - these are things that everybody can do. But rather the genius, the ultimate genius, has the *whole of the universe* inside himself. He exists as a conscious, individual entity, as an "atom" in the universe, fully aware of himself and his own separateness, but - at the same time as being entirely remotely separate from the entire universe - he contains the whole universe within himself, and therefore he knows everything about the entire universe for all time. Though not in a scientific way."

David: "This would count out Einstein. Wasn't it Weininger who said that no scientific person can become a genius?"

Kevin: "Exactly."

David: "So that would count out Einstein."

Kevin: "Yes, because Einstein never actually went beyond the finiteness of scientific concepts."

David: "Yes, Einstein was very disappointing because he had a great brain, no doubt about it - discovering these theories about relativity and so on. But what a foolish waste of life! Pursuing physics!"

Kevin: "And quarrelling with his wife."

David: "Instead of trying to understand the nature of reality itself - which is the philosophic goal - he wasted his life on this temporary, imperfect knowledge of science."

Sue: "I think it was actually to impress his wife, and to impress his women followers and the public in general."

David: "That's right. As soon as you become a serious thinker and want this ultimate knowledge, then the first people who will run away from you and won't have anything to do with you are women. So it is a real test of your love of thought, that you can withstand this and yet continue on pursuing Truth - all the while having women and men everywhere despise you for having this conscience. This is what faith is. This is what Jesus and other people mean by faith - that you continue to chase this knowledge in spite of all these worldly sufferings."

Kevin: "This is a very important subject, the subject of genius. It relates to philosophy, and it is interesting that there have never been any female philosophers - never - although I often hear people saying that the 'mothers of the Catholic Church' are philosophers. I think this is a very important topic to discuss."

David: "We might have some music first, shall we?"

Kevin: "We'll have some music. America is famous for producing philosophers. We played some Bob Dylan a couple of weeks ago and this evening we've got Edie Brickell, who ideally characterizes female philosophy."

[MUSIC BREAK - "What I am", by EdieBrickell]

*I'm not aware of too many things
I know what I know if you know what I mean
I'm not aware of too many things
I know what I know if you know what I mean*

*Philosophy is the talk on the cereal box
Religion is the smile on a dog*

*I'm not aware of too many things
I know what I know if you know what I mean*

Choke me in the shallow water before I get too deep

*What I am is what I am
You what you are or what?
What I am is what I am
You what you are oh ...*

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

*I'm not aware of too many things
I know what I know if you know what I mean*

*Philosophy is a walk on slippery rocks
Religion is a light in the fog*

*I'm not aware of too many things
I know what I know if you know what I mean*

*Choke me in the shallow water before I get to deep
Choke me in the shallow water before I get too deep*

*What I am is what I am
You what you are or what?
What I am is what I am
You what you are oh ...*

I say I say I say I do

David: "I think we've had enough of that song. Thanks Edie. Can there be a female genius?"

Sue: "Absolutely impossible."

David: "And why is that?"

Sue: "Well, to start with, you're talking about a creature who is female and, as we have already ascertained, females are not conscious. You have to be conscious; it's a prerequisite of genius. You have to be aware of the consequences of your actions. You have to understand that if you are passionate and longing for something, then you have to work towards it, and that you have to curtail parts of your life. So you have to know what you're doing and how you're doing it. The thing is, women can't do this because, as far as they're concerned, there are no consequences to anything they do. If you're not conscious, then that means you don't recognize anything that you do; you don't recognize the long term consequences of what you do."

Kevin: "You know, women always say that the special thing about being a woman is, in fact, that they are aware of the interrelationships between things in nature. Yet we're saying that they don't have this awareness of interrelationships. So which is right? Is it the case that a woman's awareness of interrelations is unconscious and therefore not real? Is that what we're saying?"

Sue: "Things arise and they respond. Well, you really couldn't even say it's responding; it's really just *drifting*."

Kevin: "So it's just the same as what animals do."

Sue: "That's right."

Kevin: "Animals are aware of the interrelationships in nature. As we mentioned on a previous program, wombats have a close connection with the earth, but it doesn't mean that they are philosophers."

David: "Weininger says that women have 'henids'. Whereas men have thoughts, women have henids."

Kevin: "What exactly are henids, David?"

David: "Well, there a sort of pre-thought. A henid lacks the clarity and penetration of an actual thought. It's more of a vague feeling or sensation, not a clear cut concept. When I look at women, they seem so spontaneous and free and happy--"

Sue: "They're already geniuses, aren't they."

David: "That's right, they're already wise. They're seemingly closer to Buddhahood, which is the state of perfection. So, in other words, women are in a sense only a finger snap away from perfection, but because they aren't able to have real thoughts - only henids - there might as well be an infinite gap."

Kevin: "There is an infinite gap."

David: "And men - who are more cumbersome, more hesitant and doubtful, more watchful and so forth - are nearer to perfection precisely because they're able to clarify their thoughts."

Kevin: "This would explain why all the religious traditions say that women are incapable of becoming enlightened. Take Jesus, for example. Not only was Jesus himself a man, but he chose for his main representatives twelve men. There wasn't a single woman among them. So here he was, a supposed prince of compassion, and he didn't even choose a single woman amongst his twelve apostles! And in Buddhism, it is said that it's absolutely impossible for a woman to become enlightened."

David: "Nicheren - was that his name? - Nicheren says that it is more difficult for a woman to become a Buddha than for a dried up seed sprout."

Kevin: "That's right, and it's not very easy for a dried up seed sprout to become a Buddha, is it? But they do say, though - I mean, I don't want to totally discourage women from any form of thinking - that if a woman be-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

comes reborn as a man then she *can* advance along the path of Truth."

David: "So does Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas. You know that wise old Gospel which was rejected by those political compilers of the New Testament? A disciple said to Jesus, 'Look what are these women doing here? They are not worthy of life!' And Jesus said, 'No, I will teach this woman to become a man, because it is only by becoming a man that one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven'. So yes, there is very much a consensus on this issue."

Kevin: "This 'rebirth' doesn't literally mean getting another body, obviously. From the fact that Jesus says he can teach a woman to become a man, we can see that rebirth really means a change of mind. A different outlook on the world is actually the same as a rebirth."

David: "It's about different values, isn't it. Valuing Truth."

Sue: "Or just simply *valuing*. And this goes for both men and women. It's not only women out there who are valueless. There are also a lot of men out there who have such a strong female component or, more importantly, who are under the influence of women to such a high degree, that they can't even begin to think about any of this sort of stuff. So the whole point of starting to think means that you have to really separate yourself ... you have to actually know what woman is and then start to separate yourself from it. That's a difficult thing - an extremely difficult thing - because woman is absolutely everywhere. She is in everything you do - from your job to your home life, to the very way that you wear your clothes and clean your teeth."

Kevin: "Sue, you personally must find it very difficult being a woman in our society, which is probably the most ignorant and foolish society that there has ever been in all of history. People like to think that we're advancing, but personally I think that the quality of education in universities is lower than it has ever been. You're a woman in this society who is saying that the masculine way is the only noble way to go. This must cause a lot of conflict in your own self?"

Sue: "Yes. I'm constantly battling the feminine in my own self. I'm not just talking of external matters here; I'm talking about inside me. Inside me there is woman, and every day

I have to say to myself, 'No, I'm not going to let myself get dragged down into her. I'm not going to be passive and go into the dreamland that woman is.' I mean, woman is a wonderful place. Everybody has experienced it - I just happen to have it right there constantly on the tip of my mind saying, 'Come on, just ignore everything. Be happy. Go along with everything. Go shopping. You'll be alright'. I tell you if I fall into that trap, I'm dead. You see, this is the difference between me and other females. I know if I fall into woman - I don't think it's possible at the moment, but I suppose anything is possible in the future - but at the moment I feel strong, so that I'm going to stick with it. I want to *live*. My goal is to live."

Kevin: "What about all the men, though, who don't have an awful lot of femininity in them - maybe only thirty percent - and yet you wouldn't want to know them. I'm talking about the sort of people who go to the pub, who talk a load of absolute rubbish, get drunk, beat their wives up ... what can you say? These men hardly deserve to live. They're not a very good example of manliness, are they?"

Sue: "Ah, but there is still *potential* in these men. This is the whole point. Within every man there is more possibility of wisdom than there is with any woman."

Kevin: "So you're saying there is a possibility for these men to "see the light", so to speak, and within a few months they can be transformed into quite upstanding individuals?"

David: "Oh well, not so much that, but they may pass on the masculine traits of striving and idealism to their children, perhaps."

Kevin: "At least, they're expressing some sort of principle. Even though the principle might only be that of going to the pub and getting drunk, at least it is a principle. They have consciously arrived at that particular philosophy."

David: "It's similar to the argument that men have created all the wars and all the environmental destruction, so obviously being a man is a bad thing. But I'd say that this is not the case. Even though men are doing these bad things, they are also capable of doing good things. Indeed, just the fact

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

that they *are* doing bad things means they're capable of doing good things."

Kevin: "That's right. The consciousness of badness, in a sense, automatically creates the consciousness of goodness as well. If the one exists, then the other also exists. Women, on the other hand, have no conscious knowledge of either goodness or badness, and so live in a nether-world of dreaminess."

David: "Yes, this is interesting, as I think it goes to the core of our evolution. The sexes are bipolarized and very much complement one another. Women - even in our enlightened times of 1995 - are brought up to be basically childlike, soft, non-doers, and passive, while men are still brought up to be the opposite. Men are brought up to believe that they are evil creatures and oppressors."

Sue: "Bad to the bone."

David: "Yes. So, in this way, men have evolved to be wilder. They're more able to do things, but at the same time they're tethered. They're continually under the spell of certain concepts which say that they are more evil than women, that women are purer, more moral."

Kevin: "I think a good example of this would be the writer, Demidenko? What's her first name?"

Sue: "Helen."

Kevin: "Yes, Helen Darville, or whatever."

David: "We'll assume that for the moment."

Kevin: "I mean, men are often called liars. Men tell lies. And it's a true enough thing to say. But, the thing is, men *consciously* tell lies. They are always conscious of the fact that they're telling a lie. A man's consciousness, you see, is extremely complex. There are many, many different levels, and so there are many, many different levels of lies. However, the fact still remains that these lies are conscious. But when women lie it's not the same thing, because women really *believe* in what they're saying. A good example is this writer, Helen Darville: the only way she was able to perpetrate a lie was to actually believe in it herself. So, in a sense, she was still able to maintain the illusion of purity and innocence. Because women live unconsciously in this fashion, they always escape the responsibility through their femininity."

Sue: "That's right. Her whole life is a lie."

Kevin: "Every woman's is."

David: "In what sense? If they're not conscious, how can they lie?"

Sue: "Their whole life is a lie. I'm not speaking about the *individual* woman here. By no means does an individual woman lie."

David: "What do you mean by 'lie', then?"

Kevin: "It's something which appears to be something but isn't. A deception or an illusion. I think in Hinduism they call women *Avidya*, which means "the embodiment of illusion". This is precisely what woman is, and it ties in perfectly with what we're saying now. Women appear to be everything which they are not."

David: "Yes, I think we should actually stress the point that what we are saying here isn't original. It has all been said by all the various wise men throughout the ages, such as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche and the Buddhas and Jesus and so forth. All these people who are universally regarded as great geniuses, who possess the greatest minds in history, and all of them to a tee have come down on woman and on femininity. Now it's often argued that this is merely due to conditioning. These men, people argue - great as they were - weren't able to escape the conditioning of their times. But, I mean, we're talking about the *greatest geniuses* here, men who have uncovered what is ultimately real and who have more or less liberated their minds from delusion. So it doesn't sound convincing to me that they somehow remained trapped by women."

Kevin: "How would you respond to women who say, 'Oh sure, there's all these great wise men like the Buddha and Lao Tzu and so on, but what they've experienced is only a *masculine* enlightenment. It's the enlightenment of the male mind and therefore not the same thing as the enlightenment of the female mind'? Men are in fact very, very foolish because of all the men who have ever existed there's only been a few of them who have actually achieved this male enlightenment. But in the case of female enlightenment, virtually *every* woman experiences this. So who's got the best idea? Surely, the women are the smarter ones?"

Sue: "What's this female enlightenment? What is it?"

David: "... um ... do you want to have a crack at that one Sue?"

Sue: "Sorry, I'm lost there."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "Yeah, I'm lost as well. But then, maybe that's the idea. It's just trying to somehow confuse us, isn't it?"

David: "Well, they probably mean some sort of child-like state of mind."

Kevin: "I think they mean a total unconsciousness. A total unconsciousness is regarded by women to be a form of enlightenment. It's a going back into the womb. This is what most feminism strives for--"

David: "Oh come on! Not so far back! Infancy."

Kevin: "Okay, not so far back as the womb - thank you for correcting me. Infancy is what feminism strives for. Whereas men want to go forward as far away from the womb as possible. They want to go away from the mother's apron strings, to go on and conquer death itself. They want to go beyond death and achieve immortality."

David: "Ideally, you mean. Some men. The real men."

Kevin: "Yes - to the degree that they're masculine."

David: "This is the disappointing thing with most men. They are persuaded to keep their gaze towards their infancy. The whole thing about getting involved in a relationship, with all its comforts and mediocrity, is really a crawling back to childhood. They're not brought up nowadays to do something significant with their lives. No one is encouraging them to actually go out and conquer death. No one believes in that sort of stuff anymore; it's regarded as something out of the Middle Ages. And this is part of the whole feminization of our society: it's all heading towards this childhood experience. The mystical experience, for example, is now regarded as the highest state open to humanity and it's falling right into hands of woman."

Kevin: "Perhaps we should have a concrete example. We've been talking about this difference between men being conscious, on the one hand, and women being unconscious, on the other, but how does this actually manifest in real life? Perhaps we should look at the example of love. Now love is the thing which most people value more than anything else in the world and, without which, a woman's life is nothing. Men can live without love because they have their computers and their money and their four wheel drives and so on, but a woman's life is love and children and

family. What is the relationship between love and genius, for example? Is there a relationship between love and intelligence? What does intelligence make of love? Is love real? Is it only for women? Is it possible for a man to love? Is a woman's love and a man's love the same thing? Any ideas on this?"

Sue: "Well, first, it is *absolutely impossible* for women to love, because the only way they can exist is through other people. So when they 'love' a child, or 'love' a husband, or 'love' their mother or father, what's actually happening is that they're using those other people for their existence. It is only through those relationships do they actually exist. So when a woman says that she has unconditional love for her child, don't believe her! What's actually happening is that she's using that child as she would a new bangle - a way to enhance her position on the planet."

Kevin: "This is why women spend so much time gossiping on the phone, because they wouldn't exist without that social contact. Children just provide another form of social contact."

Sue: "Children are just another thing to talk about. Women love to talk, as we all know, and as you say it's their connection with the world - it makes them alive."

Kevin: "It's impossible for a woman to have a *mental* connection; everything with woman has to be physical. This is why women value their bodies so much."

David: "They value touching, don't they."

Kevin: "Yes, they value touching a whole lot more than men. Women feel violated a lot more with respect to their bodies than men do, whereas men feel violated when their mind has been violated."

David: "An example of this is, of course, the issue of what women wear. We were out on the town last night, weren't we, and--"

Kevin: "I remember well!"

David: "And there were mini skirts and cleavage everywhere. Now this, in my view, is a form of rape. It is a form of abuse, of harassment, because although I try to avoid it, it still manages to invade my mind. So, by presenting themselves the way they do, women are violating what I consider to be most precious - my mind. Women say that their most precious thing is their vagina. They say that being raped is something more significant than being bashed up because their vagi-

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

nas have been violated. Men, on the other hand, are being violated *every day* through this constant sexual invasion of their mental processes."

Kevin: "I don't think women can even conceive of a mind being violated. They have no conception that a man's mind can be violated by what they do, and I think it is because they have no conception of mind. They have no conception that man actually *has* a mind, because they assume that men are the same as themselves. So, everyday, they're out there raping men by the way they behave and the way they dress and the flashes of the eyes and the smiles. They're constantly raping and they have no conception of what they're doing."

David: "No, and in fact they actually *praise* people like Madonna who does this sort of thing for a living - and it is easy to see that someone like Madonna hasn't thought about *anything* in her whole life. She doesn't give a damn about the consequences of how she lives and this is the icon of the feminist movement at the moment - Madonna."

Sue: "And it is the purpose in all women's lives to achieve the best body, to wear the most fashionable clothes - all the magazines are full of it, all the gossip columns are full of it. Her every thought is concentrated on just this - fashion. And yeah, there are no consequences to it. If somebody hasn't a mind then there definitely isn't going to be any thought of consequences. So all she does is just drift in and out of whatever the fashion happens to be."

Kevin: "It makes me laugh that we have all these different types of feminism today and they are all totally incompatible with each other. You have feminists changing their minds from week to week - if not week to week, then at least month to month. When they're questioned as to how it is that they believed 'that' last month and now 'this' this month, they say, 'Oh well, we've progressed from there! We've advanced! You see, feminism is only a very new thing; it's only been around for a few years.' And this is in fact a load of rubbish, because feminism is as old as the hills. It rears its head for a few years, then the fashion dies out and so it goes away again. And this has happened periodically for thousands of years - this feminism we're experiencing at the moment is nothing new whatsoever. Now the fact that the feminist's

view on life is changing from month to month means that we can't respect anything - and I mean *anything* - feminists say."

David: "It's funny, isn't it. They praise this changing outlook as a great virtue and then the very next moment they're saying to men, 'What part of 'No' don't you understand?' - as if they really believe that women stick to their 'No' over two consecutive moments! Surely, one would think, it must be the only thing that doesn't change within their minds, this idea of No! However, men know that women are changing all the time."

Kevin: "Yes, a woman does actually mean "No" at the time she says it - but that only lasts for one moment."

Sue: "And then the next moment it can mean 'Yes'."

Kevin: "And then the very next moment a 'Yes' can mean 'No' ..."

David: "Each moment becomes a whole new ball game."

Kevin: "My head is spinning just thinking about it! It makes life very difficult for those men who don't understand women. I must say that as I was growing up I foolishly imagined that all human beings were basically the same. I mean, I knew that I was a human being and so I thought that other people were more or less the same as me. I could not believe that women didn't have a consciousness; I could not believe that women were not intelligent - it probably took me a good ten years of hard thinking, with many hours of thinking every day, as well as having it proven to me through hard experience. It took ten years to know with certainty what I had suspected when I was ten years old. Just from watching the women in my life - my mother and friends and so on - I saw very early the fact that women simply do not think ... in the way that men think."

David: "I think it is very important to keep stressing this. It could be construed that we're out to be harsh with women, that we want to hurt them, but this is not the case. The whole point of this discussion is to articulate the philosophic path. I mean, we live in a world where the philosophic path is totally meaningless to people; it no longer even exists, and the biggest reason for this is the worship of the feminine. The reason why people don't search for Truth is because they're obsessed with Woman. Both men and women are

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

obsessed with Woman - it's at the centre of everybody's existence."

Kevin: "Yes, I'd like to say, on top of what I said previously, that I'm not blaming women. I don't think any of us are blaming women for what they are. There are causes for everything that happens on earth; there are causes for women being what they are, and one of the main causes for women being what they are is men. Men constitute the molding force which creates women, and women allow themselves to be shaped by men - genetically and psychologically. So if women are going to improve - and I regard women as being like my daughters, so I am speaking now as a father - if women are going to be helped, then men have to start treating women with respect, and that means expecting women to be rational. It means not loving them, for example - not loving them in the emotional way. Sure, love women *intellectually*; respect them as the human beings that they may possibly become - human in the sense of being consciously reasoning human beings. And then, and only then, can we expect women to become more masculine. But until men actually change the way they're treating women, it's not going to happen."

Sue: "That's right. Men have to be strong and consistent every day and in this way they can set an example for women."

Kevin: "But when you have the men of today with their ponytails and their shaved faces which make them look more and more like women--"

David: "And the earrings."

Kevin: "--and the earrings, and the pink shirts, and so on."

David: "And the smiles."

Kevin: "And the smiles, and the gossip, and the mobile phones, you can't ... women look at all this and they think there is no such thing as masculinity. It is hardly a good example men are setting for women."

David: "Anyway, we are nearing the end of the program but, before we go, we'd like to share a few quotes which we came up with the other day. Kevin and I had a spare afternoon, so--"

Kevin: "We were saying before how a man should never love a woman, and even more than that he should certainly never marry."

David: "Yes, so we came up with *The Book of Wife*, which is going to be one of our

epic productions, and I'll just read out a few words from it":

'What is the best teacher? Wife itself.'
'Wisdom is gained through the experience of wife.'
'We must strive to give our wives meaning!'
'He was a good man, full of wife.'
'Despair comes to those who think about wife.'
'Happy is a man who leads a charmed wife.'
'Marriage is a matter of wife and death.'
'I'm a man of principle, whatever I do I do for wife.'
'He sacrificed his wife for truth.'
'The important thing is not to take wife seriously.'
'The brave man laughs wife in the face.'

Kevin: "David, these aren't funny! These are very, very serious!"

Sue: "Terrifyingly so!"

Kevin: "I'm breaking out in a sweat!"

David:

'Having children was the highest point of my wife.'
'The most evil thing a man can do is the taking of wife.'
'The chances of there being intelligent wife on other planets are exceedingly slim based on current data available.'
'Money is the essential ingredient for the enjoyment of wife.'
'A bachelor is a man who is afraid of real wife.'
'A bunch of flowers can provide a new lease on wife.'
'I have sought the higher wife in vain.'

Kevin: "What do you make of those, Sue? You didn't write any of those, did you?"

Sue: "I wish I had!"

David: "There is certainly an endless, rich seam there. I think we can come up with a good book. But we'll have to go, I suppose."

Kevin: "If people want a copy of *The Book of Wife*, they can write to our address which is: P.O. Box 207, St. Lucia, 4067, or if you just want to write to us about any subject at all."

David: "Yes, just get to know us if you want. We are here. Okay, thanks, Sue, it was a pleasure talking with you."

Sue: "Thank you."

David: "Yes, it was a very interesting conversation. And we'll be back next week. See you later."

THE PRIESTHOOD

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -
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3rd September, 1995

Guests:

- Dominic Kelly - third year student at the Catholic Seminary at Banyo, Brisbane.
- Clyde Cosentino - second year student at the Catholic Seminary at Banyo, Brisbane.

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

David: "Hello everyone. I'm David Quinn and this is *The Hour of Judgment* - the thinking man's radio program. This is part of a series of radio programs put together by Kevin Solway and myself for the sole aim of promoting wisdom. We try to do this by inviting people along to the program every week, people who are serious and passionate about the great issues of life, and with them Kevin and I will try to discuss, debate, reason, argue, interrogate, cajole, and otherwise do all we can to get to the very bottom of things, and produce genuine thoughts about reality. Now, tonight, we have two fellows from the Catholic seminary over at Banyo. They are students studying to be priests, and their names are Dominic Kelly and Clyde Cosentino. Welcome, both of you."

Dominic: "Thank you very much."

Clyde: "Thank you."

David: "And also, of course, we have our resident expert, Kevin Solway. G'day Kevin."

Kevin: "How are ya."

David: "To start off, perhaps we could find out a bit about you two. Take you, Dominic, first. You're studying at the seminary. It's a seven year course. At the end, there are vows and a life in the priesthood. Can you give a bit of background and tell us what you were doing before, and what made you become a theological student at the seminary."

Dominic: "Okay, thank you. Well, actually, theological student was probably the second thing that I thought I'd be doing - the first thing was simply going to the seminary and studying to be a priest. However, my main role at the moment is probably a theo-

logical student, because being in the early stages of my time at the seminary it's mainly academic, and the main focus is theology at this stage. A little bit about myself: I went to St Edmond's at Ipswich, a Christian Brothers school, finishing there in 1985. I started a degree in mathematics at the Queensland Institute of Technology. But I took a bit of time off my degree and managed an RSL club in Ipswich for a while, before deciding to get into the workforce and work for the AMP Society. Although I went back and started studying again, trying to finish off my mathematics degree, I in fact got more or less carried away with my career at AMP, and my last position there was as a superannuation consultant. But I decided that there was something I've always wanted to do, that has always been on my mind, and that was priesthood. I wanted to investigate that and discern that fully, and the best place for discerning priesthood is at the seminary. So I left my job, went to the seminary at Banyo, and that's where I am now. I'm currently in third year."

David: "You went to the Catholic seminary, but why not another type of Christianity? Why Catholic? I suppose you were brought up as a Catholic?"

Dominic: "That's a fair question. Basically, I've been given a Catholic faith from an early age, and I guess as I got older this transferred from a child-faith to an adult-faith. I guess that when I really established it as an adult-faith I made the decision to investigate priesthood. It's always been on my mind. When I was a child, I would often admire the priests, and I would follow them around. Of course, I was an alter boy - for many of us at the seminary, our origins stem back to being alter boys - and I think that when you are an alter boy, you're given a certain perspective of the priest's life that most people don't have. You see his private life, you see the man behind the vestments, and I guess that it was a role I've always admired. I saw a great need for priests in our society. I guess that, given

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

my character and my interests and my passions, I suppose, if I was brought up in the Anglican church, I would probably have gone on to be an Anglican minister."

David: "Okay. When you leave at the end of seven years, you become a priest. Is that correct?"

Dominic: "Yes."

David: "Do you have any ambitions. Do you want to be a Bishop? What do you want to do?"

Dominic: "That's an interesting question. No, basically, I think the only ambition you should have when you come to a seminary is simply to serve. You shouldn't be looking upon becoming a Bishop as like a power base, or as a promotional position. I think you'd find that most people who are Bishops more or less ... I don't think it's a job that most priests would love to have, actually. I think it's one that Bishops usually accept reluctantly. It is a tough job. I guess that what I would do when ordained is become a diocesan priest - meaning, I will go out into a parish and I'll be given a certain territory and I'll be a presiding priest in that territory ... say, for example, the suburb of Banyo or I could go back to Ipswich. I think I'd just like to be a simple diocesan priest."

David: "Okay then. Clyde, what about yourself?"

Clyde: "Well, I suppose my Catholic background goes right back to my early days. I was taught by the Sisters of Mercy at Lourdes Convent at Ingham, in North Queensland. And then I had the opportunity of being taught by the Christian Brothers at Cardinal Gilroy College. Then I was taught by the Marist Brothers at St Augustine's College in Cairns and then came down here to Brisbane in 1985 to study law. In my first year I stayed at St Leo's College at the University of Queensland, which was run by the Jesuit priests. So I've had the opportunity of being with people from the church right since my early days. I studied law at the Queensland University of Technology, starting in 1985 ... My history went from law for three years to a Bachelor of Science at the University of Queensland in 1988. Then I applied for an associate diploma in Community Welfare at the James Cook University in Townsville. Following this, I went back into law again when I was offered a job as an Article

Clerk in Ingham. I worked five years in that position, and here I am now. By way of my vocation in the priesthood, I've thought about it for approximately ten years - probably more, ever since I was in primary school. I remember a priest, a young priest friend, who has since died of cancer, one day pulling me over after asking the question in class, 'What do you want to do for the rest of your lives?' And I put up my hand and said that I wanted to be Catholic priest. And, of course, I got a ribbing from the rest of my class, and so I sort of backed down from that. But I remember him pulling me aside one lunchtime and saying, 'Clyde, don't ever, ever put that out of your mind'. And that stuck with me ever since. Like Dominic, I treat the seminary as a place of discernment; my end-goal is to be a presbyter back in my diocese in Townsville. However, where I am at now, I'm struggling with the issues and ... I'm praying every day."

Kevin: "I'd like to ask a difficult question - after hearing your interesting stories. Obviously, both of you have decided that the priesthood is the best way of life. Now, I'd like to analyse it on a more psychological level, and ask: are you choosing this career path because it is what you are familiar and comfortable with - both of you have had a long history in this particular form of religion - or are you doing it because it's *true*?"

Dominic: "Well ... I think I'd like to answer that, Kev. I think, basically, as I said before, I was given a faith as a child and then I progressed into an adult-faith. Now, I guess, basically ... I'm not actually comfortable in it, and I think if I was comfortable in it, then I would probably question what it was I was doing at the seminary. Because in my life, when I was working at AMP Society, I was comfortable there and life just seemed a little bit too easy for me. I felt that I was ignoring something deep inside me which was asking me to do something more with my life. The only way you can really fully investigate this is through deep prayer, and take the time out ... and I've got a faith, so I *can* pray to a God that I believe in and can share with many other people in my community."

Kevin: "Let's examine this aspect of faith. This seems to be central to becoming a priest. Can you explain what you mean by the word 'faith'?"

[Silence]

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "It's a difficult one."

Dominic: "It is a difficult one. To explain what faith is is a bit like trying to explain what God is, and to explain what God is like wrestling with a big blob of jelly - you can't actually get a handful of it. Once you get a handful of it, it's around behind you - it's all over the place. But faith is, basically, having a belief in something. I think that at the end of the day we've all got to believe in something. Some of us believe in our job, our wife, our children, our house, but if we lose those things then what do we believe in? If we start to fail ourselves, if we start to let ourselves down, what is it that we actually believe in?"

Kevin: "This amorphous idea of God that you believe in ... can you give us some explanation of what is God to you?"

Dominic: "Well, to me, God is a divine mystery, first of all, a guiding hand in my life. God is something that drives and pushes me in life, and has created the earth and has created me and is very much in love with me. And through my faith, I've come to love God myself. And that's something which helps me get through life."

Kevin: "So you would see God as some kind of intelligent being, in the way that we are intelligent. We can intelligently create a radio station, for example, so God in the same way intelligently creates, what, the world, the universe ...?"

Dominic: "Well, yes. I believe in an all-loving God ..."

Clyde: "I think Dominic has just hit it on the head there. I tend to look at God as an all-being in love. My perception of God has always been influenced, I suppose, by people as well. I've always had a love for people. And so when I look at people, I also picture God. And I suppose it stems back to my early childhood, because we learnt about Jesus Christ and we learnt about Jesus's presence here on earth two thousand years ago, where God, through the Incarnation, became flesh and blood, became one of us, and therefore was able to experience love, anger, sorrow, etc. So knowing this has just made it that much easier. So when I see people, I see Christ; so I have that relational thing."

Kevin: "Can I ask, when you see people and you see Christ, what is it that you see in people that you give the name 'Christ' to?"

Clyde: "Hmm, I suppose that's a difficult question, because in people, of course, you see imperfection, you see sadness, you see suffering--"

Kevin: "Quite right. Dishonesty."

Clyde: "Exactly. You see all those vices and you think, 'How can God be in these people'? I suppose it helps to know that Jesus also suffered from the temptations and weaknesses - I don't know whether he actually exhibited the vices which we see around us - but he still experienced these weaknesses. I see in people *love*. No matter what vices they might have, I always look at the positive things in all people."

Kevin: "Well, people love their vices, don't they? They certainly have love! They love their football; they love being violent; they love being dishonest."

Dominic: "Kev, I'd just like to say that when you meet people like that - who talk about their football, who talk about their vices - if you spend enough time with them, you notice that these are all on a shallow level with them, and that there is a deeper side to them. I think that when you actually get to tap into that deep side of an individual, you start to see that there is something very similar about that person as there is to yourself, and to other people. You can start seeing a similarity between all individuals that you meet every day, and you can start to see that there's something very pure and very loving about that person."

Kevin: "Okay, let's look at this area - with the purpose of coming to some understanding of what God is and what is significant in life. This underlying love in people, if we can call it that - let's try and ascertain exactly what it is. What is it that people love which has this deeper significance? Have you any ideas about that, David ...?"

Dominic: "Well, I think, Kevin, that this love which people have is simply an interest in the world around them and where they came from and what life is about. At the end of the day, they're less interested in their jobs and in the problems of their relationships, and they are searching for a deeper meaning to life. Life must be more than this."

Kevin: "A deeper satisfaction? A deeper belonging? A deeper security or permanence?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Dominic: "Yes, a dependence on something which is very real. It is a dependency which, I think, comes through faith, where we become dependent on God. We stop becoming dependent on things which fail and which have limitations, and we start having a dependency on something which is limitless - like God, the divine mystery."

Kevin: "Okay, but what I see, though, is that ... yes, there's no denying that everyone wants more satisfaction. We have a deep love of permanent bliss and permanent happiness. This is probably the driving motivation behind everything - behind people wanting great wealth, behind people wanting to commit great crimes. Everything, if you take it back to it's core, comes from a very deep hunger for belongingness, for satisfaction, for approval, for a feeling of homeness. Everybody has this - from the so-called best of people to the very worst. So I'm wondering where in this is spirituality? Where, in this desire for satisfaction, is God?"

Dominic: "I think that it all comes down to people's values. What you said about comfort and efficiency is very true. I mean, look at the way our advertising agencies work. Basically, there are two underlying things to modern thought, which influences all our media and what we read from day to day - basically, it's stressing comfort and efficiency. And I think both of those go against Gospel values; and people, at the end of the day, think that it's very shallow and empty. And I think this feeling of comfort and efficiency has a corroding effect on our lives. And because it's a corroding effect - like salt-water that destroys cars which are parked over a long period of time at, say, Broadbeach - we don't really notice it until the damage is done."

Kevin: "Okay, let's go from there, from the fact that we are looking for something which is permanent and lasting, and ask ourselves what it is exactly that is permanent and lasting. What is it we are all looking for? You, no doubt, would say it is God. So let's examine the idea of what *can* be permanent. Can an intelligent being be permanent? You were speaking before about God being an intelligent creator. Is it possible for such a being to be permanent? Now, I would say that the only thing that can be permanent is reality itself - meaning, everything, the totality of all existence. The totality must necessarily be

permanent because by definition there can be nothing other than the totality. And the totality includes you and me and every insignificant, little thing on the planet - and it is permanent, because it's *total*."

David: "You're not talking about something physical, are you? People might think this is a pagan, atheistic kind of view. But, really, it's something different, isn't it?"

Kevin: "It is physical - and any other word you might wish to describe it. It's everything. The totality includes the physical, and the non-physical, and the abstract, and the emotions - everything. So I'm saying that this totality must be permanent, by definition, because there can't be anything more than the totality. I'm questioning whether the concept of God as a being who can intelligently create - and who is not the totality, who is not every little, insignificant thing on the planet ... how can such a being can be permanent? It is not possible. Any thoughts on this?"

Dominic: "Well, I just simply think that what's not possible for us, is possible for God. I mean, basically, I think the mind of God is far greater than the mind of man, and I can think of nothing greater than God."

David: "Okay, Dominic, how important is the truth of your conception of God, or the truth of your religion? Is truth an important factor? I mean, it would be a shame if, after having gone into the priesthood, this God of yours doesn't exist. So have you investigated precisely what this God is that you worship, and whether He actually exists?"

Dominic: "Well, yes, I do investigate it, and I investigate it everyday. It's not uncommon for a seminarian to wake up one morning and think, 'Oh my God, are You really there?' I mean, sometimes you feel totally abandoned, just like Christ felt abandoned when he was on the cross. That just showed the human side of Christ and it shows the human side of ourselves. We do doubt and we do fail to believe from time to time. We like to see something physical; we like to look around and use the five senses that we can name, as intelligent beings, and we may ignore what we don't know and see, but what we do nevertheless feel inside and what we have been born with. I think there's something very innate inside us which is screaming out for a relationship with God."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

David: "So, in other words, you're saying that it is not possible to ascertain the ultimate truth of God. You're basically saying that it is unknowable."

Dominic: "Yes. But I believe that God is Truth. We can never totally grasp or totally know it, but it's something that we need to strive for. I look at it this way: we can never ever come to "know" the mystery, but we can certainly come to know 'the mystery'."

David: "The only problem is, there are millions of Gods in the world, and many religions. So we have the Buddhists, for example, who profess a spiritual life and are interested in Truth, who claim to make Truth the centre of their lives - but they don't have any conception of God at all. So we have all these millions of people in the world who follow Buddhism and all these millions of people who follow Christianity - and, obviously, at the very least, one of these religions must be wrong. So it's fraught with danger, don't you think, to just merely accept--?"

Clyde: "Well, David, I'd say you have to be careful in saying that Buddhists don't follow a God, and Christians do. I mean, we'd be arrogant if we said that we follow the only God there is. What I mean by that is ... that when Buddhists ... I'm sorry, is it Muslims? No?"

Kevin: "Islam?"

Clyde: "Or Islam? Yes, Islam. When they worship God, is it the same God as ours that they are worshipping? The same principles? The same values? I don't know enough about Islam to go on; I don't know enough about Hinduism to go on. But the principles and the values behind their living and their lifestyles is very much similar to ours."

David: "I disagree, actually. When you look at the Buddhist lifestyle ... for one thing, it is a very rational philosophy. It is something which is very reasoned out. And as well, it is a discipline. There is a path which one gradually advances along, towards a specific goal. There is a faith that the Ultimate Truth can be known - it's called enlightenment. But in Christianity, you don't have this at all; they think that such an ultimate knowledge is impossible. So we have these two completely different conceptions of life, with no similarity at all, even though on the surface there might appear to be."

Kevin: "The Buddhists don't really require faith in their ultimate knowledge. They arrive at this ultimate knowledge through a series of reasonings, and once they've reasoned it, well then, they know it. They have a full understanding of Ultimate Reality - if you go along with this way of thinking - and so faith is not something you ever find Buddhists talking about. You could go to a hundred lectures on Buddhism and never once hear the word 'faith'. So it seems that there are different religions ..."

Clyde: "... I suppose ... I suppose ... I would almost have to retract what I said before. I'm not knowledgeable about other religions. All I can talk about, I suppose, is my own faith in my God. And you spoke before about a Truth, and here we are in the seminary studying for the priesthood and our one goal, our one aim, is to love and to serve Jesus Christ - and if there is no Jesus Christ at the end of it, then where does it leave us? In a pretty sorry state, I might say. Sure, faith is something which is developed right from our very early experiences and is developed as we go through life - and I must say that my background has helped me towards that - but after a while you start to realise that it is not just a background thing. It's not just experience, it's something more. It develops into something which cannot be explained."

Kevin: "Well, there is one concept of faith I can understand, and it's something that I have to practise myself. It's the kind of faith where you know something to be true, but the knowledge of that truth is difficult to integrate into your being - because that truth makes you unhappy, perhaps. You require faith in some things that you *know* to be true, you see. Take, for example, a wife who has discovered her husband has been unfaithful. Now this is something you might like to suppress; the wife might want to suppress this knowledge. But she would require faith in her reasoning and in what she's seen to actually accept the knowledge. So this is the kind of faith I can understand - a faith in something you know to be true. But this doesn't seem to be the faith that Christians practise. There are very few Christians who would claim to actually *know*, with one hundred percent certainty, that they know God, and then, from that point, having to have faith in what they know to be true. Is this the kind of faith that

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

you practise? Do you know with one hundred percent certainty that God exists, or that God is like 'this' or like 'that', and then you have faith in what you know to be true? Or is your faith more of a *hoping*, a hoping that God is like 'this' or 'that'? What do you think?"

Clyde: "Again, all I can say is that if I was to say I know God, or that people know God is 'this', then that makes us God Himself, and I don't think any single person can say what God is. But, yeah, faith ..."

Kevin: "Well, let's take Jesus, for example. Now, as far as I know, Jesus was a human being - I don't think he was an alien from another planet or anything like that."

Dominic: "Okay."

Kevin: "Okay, so he was a human being and I think he claimed to know - God! And not only that, in a sense, he regarded God to be himself. He spoke with the authority of God, and I think that he regarded God to be in the human person - in the sense that we are all Sons of God. So if it is true that we are similar to Jesus, if he was to be any kind of example to us, if he wasn't a totally different being to us, if he was like us, then it means that we are like him. If he was God, or had God in him, or if he was a part of God, then it means that we too are a part of God. If Jesus can know God - one hundred percent *know* - then it should, by rights, be possible for every individual person to know God - one hundred percent *know* - in exactly the same way as Jesus knew God. Do you think this is possible? Do you think that we are like Jesus in this sense?"

Clyde: "No, because one thing is missing there. Jesus wasn't a part of God; he was God. Jesus forms one of the three of the Blessed Trinity - and people say, 'How can you have three persons in the one God?' That has been a mystery people have been trying to explain for two thousand years, and not even the great Doctors of the Church - like St Augustine, St Athanasius and so on - could fully grip the concept. So Jesus was fully God and fully human, and so people say, 'How? How can you believe in a person who was fully God and fully human? How do you explain that?' We can't explain it."

Kevin: "What about us? Do you think that we are fully God and fully human? Or are we just fully human?"

Clyde: "We're definitely not fully God; we are definitely fully human. We have ..."

Dominic: "We are certainly made in God's image, though. That is what we believe as Christians."

Kevin: "So, we're mostly human, but a little bit like God?"

Dominic: "Well, we are created in God's image. So we are human beings, simple as that."

Kevin: "But what I'm striving at is that if I decided I wanted to be like Jesus, then not only do I want to follow in his footsteps, but I want to become in every possible way like Jesus. I don't think I've met any Christian who's actually tried to do this; he'd probably be a laughing stock if he did. But do you think this is a reasonable course for a human being to take? To become like Jesus and actually *know* Ultimate Truth and know everything that can importantly be known?"

Dominic: "I believe that that's the goal which most Christians should adopt. I mean, that's it."

Kevin: "They *should* adopt it!?"

Dominic: "They should adopt it. We wish to be like Jesus Christ. But the thing is, though, we have to be aware of our sinfulness and our limitations. We will never become Christ, but it is in the search of Christ that we will receive salvation. That's what Christians believe in."

Kevin: "Let me put something to you. I presume you had to be interviewed to be admitted in your seminary?"

Dominic: "That's right."

Kevin: "During the interview, if you were asked what your goal was in entering the seminary, and you said that your goal was to be like Jesus, that you wanted to become so much like Jesus that you can speak with the full authority of God, do you think they would actually let you into the seminary? That you wanted to speak with more authority than the Pope, with more authority than any Christian alive on the planet."

Dominic: "But, Kevin, I think that the priest interviewing you would ask what your purpose was for saying that. Are you on about power, are on about--?"

Kevin: "No, you would explain quite politely that this was your conscience speaking, that you wanted to become so perfect because it satisfies your conscience, because you

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

wanted to become perfectly truthful. And this requires you becoming so much like Jesus that you become equivalent to him - that you wanted to become God."

Dominic: "Okay, I think that you would be encouraged in that endeavour, but you'd also be encouraged to be aware of your limitations as well - and that you will never be Jesus Christ, but certainly that is the path to adopt."

Kevin: "Do you think it is possible that we could become *better* than Jesus? Let's say you--"

Dominic: "No, definitely not!"

Kevin: "Let's say you told them that you wanted to become so good that you actually wanted to become better than Jesus, to become more like God than Jesus was - if that's possible."

Clyde: "It's just not possible, because we are talking about Jesus Christ, who was God, and we are not God."

David: "Okay, if that's the case, you seem to be speaking with authority here about what is possible and what isn't possible. I mean, you'd have to be perfect yourself to be able to speak with utter conviction that perfection is impossible. No?"

Dominic: "Well, basically, I think that this just shows that you have a conviction in your faith. I mean, that's it. You're putting your life into God's hands. You've got faith there, and this is where the Christian belief emerges from."

David: "When you look at the various sayings of Jesus, his one tone is very urgent. He urged us to urgently strive for perfection. He says somewhere, 'Be perfect like your Heavenly Father is perfect'. He stressed that we should strive to give up everything we hold dear for the sake of this goal. So, obviously, Jesus seemed to imply that perfection is a possibility, and that it should be the number one goal for the human race to strive for."

Clyde: "To *strive* for."

David: "But not achieve? So, what, he's holding up this illusion? He's just kidding you at bottom?"

Clyde: "No, because in the end we all aim for the ultimate goal which is to be with Jesus Christ and with God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ... at the end of time, or after our life here on earth, anyway. That's not to say, 'Oh my goodness, we're locked up in this prison for the next sixty or seventy years and

we just want to break out!' This here is reality; this is life. However, there is something beyond death, and that is Jesus Christ."

Kevin: "Well, I'd like to examine this idea of Jesus Christ as well, actually, because David just mentioned how you were saying that perfection is not possible. We can strive for perfection but we can never achieve it, no matter how hard we strive - a bit like dangling a carrot in front of the donkey. And it's part of being human, you were saying, that we can never be perfect. But you do say that Jesus was actually perfect, so we have someone - who has this something that no human being can achieve - encouraging us to be like him! But I would like to question first of all the supposed perfection of Jesus. How can we say that Jesus was perfect? It seems that a person called Jesus did exist two thousand years ago and, judging by what was recorded under his name, we can say that he was possibly a very wise man. How do you come to the determination, as you have, that this man alone was perfect in all world history?"

Dominic: "I think, basically, my belief personally comes through faith and reason, and reason and revelation. It comes through what I can perceive through my senses, through what I perceive to be true, and also through the revelation of Christ - when Christ was here on earth. This has always been a debate among theologians - was Christ actually perfect while he was fully Incarnate here on earth? But, the thing is, God is perfect, and Jesus makes up one of those three persons which is God - the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ and God the Father, as Clyde was saying before. Now what we are doing is that we are striving for the Kingdom of God. I mean, once everything is perfect then the Kingdom of God is here, rather than in Heaven."

Kevin: "But it seems to me, though, that the idea of Jesus in your mind is more of an abstract thing, more of an absolute. So if you can think of an absolutely good person, then you are allotting the word 'Jesus' to this conception. It's like you're saying, 'Jesus is my conception of the absolutely perfect person' - which is perfectly okay. But I'm asking about the physical person called Jesus. Based on the records we have of him, can we come to a *real* conclusion - a scientific conclusion, if you like - concerning the degree of Jesus's

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

goodness? Or are we going to say, 'No, Jesus is just an abstract conception of perfection'?"

Dominic: "Well, we can't say that he was an abstraction, but we also can't scientifically prove these kinds of things either. Because what we do now is we draw into the debate the concept of faith, which is what we started our conversation with."

Kevin: "So this is 'faith' as *hope*, rather than 'faith' as *knowing*."

Dominic: "Well, there's three theological virtues - and these aren't just theological virtues, as they are also adopted by many Christian churches, and also by many Non-Christian organizations as well - and these are faith, hope, and charity. Charity is love, and hope stems from faith. Having a faith in something gives you hope, and hope is what drives us from day to day. And I think that, basically, this is what links us all as human beings - this urge inside us. There's more to life than just me; there's my neighbour. If I look out for my neighbour, my neighbour looks out for me. I think this is what links us all. We were talking before about Islam and Hinduism ... basically, when the Council of Religious Organizations meet, there is only one thing that really links all the religions and beliefs in the world, and that is simply we need to be good to one another. We all believe in the common good."

Kevin: "I think we should get back, though, to this idea of Jesus. You said that we can't prove scientifically that Jesus was perfectly good."

Dominic: "That's correct."

Kevin: "And Jesus is not an abstraction of the perfect person, so by what means do we arrive at the knowledge that Jesus was perfectly good? You no doubt say that you take this on faith. But we must have some *reasons* for taking it on faith in the first place."

David: "Or else it becomes purely arbitrary."

Kevin: "Exactly."

David: "I mean, there are other men in the world who have claimed perfection - like the Buddha, for example, or Krishna. So there is a whole series to choose from. Why Jesus, and not somebody else?"

Dominic: "I think, basically, it comes back to our childhood faith. It was what we were brought up and handed down to us through

our tradition. But also too, we have great thinkers in the world who are highly recognized by our society and who proclaim themselves as atheists as well. I mean, you've got a very intelligent debate there as well. I believe that God touches their lives, though they may name it differently or they may choose not to name it at all."

David: "It still doesn't answer the fundamental question, though. I mean, presumably, travelling the spiritual path is the most important thing in life. To take a mundane example, if you were going to buy a car, you wouldn't just go to the nearest dealer up the road and buy the first machine you see. Instead, you'd shop around and try to pick the best model at the best price. So, in terms of the spiritual path, you would want to be absolutely *certain* of your direction, because it is the most important thing a person can do."

Clyde: "That's what makes it so different, because it is a spiritual path. We talk about reason, but reason is something that we do by way of human understanding and, remember, human understanding is limited. If we were to go through life using human understanding as a gauge, we would be a very poor people. I think we cannot just say that if there is no reason to it, then there is no answer."

David: "But there is nothing else, you see. If there is no reason for your behaviour, then it just becomes arbitrary. Your point about how human understanding is limited, this is a reasoned out view on your part--"

Clyde: "That's right."

David: "It is a conclusion reached by human understanding. Do you see? It turns back on itself and undermines itself. So if you're not just going to act arbitrarily, if you're not just going to have a whim and say, 'Hmm, I think I'll become a Christian!', then there must be good reasons."

Clyde: "Have you ever followed a gut feeling? Have you ever followed something that just burns inside of you, something that just cannot be explained? Why is it that when I take myself, for instance, where I had the opportunity to become a partner in a law firm, of marriage, of security, of many things, where reasoning would say that there is the place to go, and yet something deep down inside, something burning, some great desire, some great love, which cannot be explained, has put me here in the seminary. Although I

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

am still discerning and questioning why I am still here, it cannot be reasoned out. And yet I am still here. And how many times in life do we see people who honestly give up their lives for someone else, even for a complete stranger! Where is the reasoning behind that? There must be something above reason.”

David: “Well, you could say there is reasoning involved in deciding whether to submit to this gut feeling in the first place, as opposed to submitting to some other thing. But you still haven’t answered the fundamental question. Okay, you may decide to submit to a gut feeling and become a Christian; people in India submit to a gut feeling and become a Hindu. I mean, why choose one over the other? Your gut feeling doesn’t help you in this.”

Dominic: “Well, okay, this stems from the tradition you come from as well. When you look at Clyde and I, we both study through the Brisbane College of Theology. Even though we are studying to be Catholic priests, when we do our theological degrees we train with Anglicans and with people from the Uniting Church faith. Now we have three different faiths here, but we all believe in the one God. We might name God differently and we might explain God differently and we might theologize about God differently, but we all believe in the same God. And you have the ecumenical movements, which have been a force since the turn of the century and which are striving towards uniting these Churches together. I mean, this shows that there is a nagging urge in all of us, which I believe is very similar. I think that, yes, countries are very different to one another, but once boundaries start being broken down and the communication gap starts to narrow, you’ll start to see the one belief emerge, which is the true belief.”

David: “Right, I should just say that if there is anyone out there who has tuned into 4RPH and is wondering what the hell is going on, this is a program called *The Hour of Judgment*, which is a program dedicated to Truth. My name is David Quinn and I’m talking to Dominic Kelly, Clyde Cosentino, and Kevin Solway. Tell me, Dominic, did you shop around? You know how I gave the example of the car dealers ... did you look at Buddhism or Hinduism? Did you look at the

various philosophies from around the world so as to determine what is true?”

Dominic: “Not in any great detail like that. You don’t have time to investigate every single faith in your life. You need to adopt one. Most of this thinking occurred with me when I went through that transition from an child-faith to an adult-faith. Now, I see the limitations within the Catholic Church. As Catholics, we acknowledge that once upon a time, in the Middle Ages, our Pope would have announced that there was no salvation outside the Catholic Church. That is now changed and we now believe that there is salvation outside of the Catholic Church. Basically, we live our lives in line with the Gospel - that is the correct way of living. I guess what I’m saying is that the tradition which I knew as a child was the tradition handed down by my family. Now, I see the Truth within the Catholic Church, and just as we have our limitations, the Church has its limitations as well. There is a very human element to the Church - I mean, the Holy Spirit is very much alive within the Church, but there is also a very human element as well. I think that rather than shop around and pick the best faith - ‘Oh, this faith seems to be the most advanced’ - stay with the faith that you do know and try to be an active part of it. I mean, even though I am not yet ordained, and so still a lay person, I am nevertheless the Church.”

David: “Alright, but take a person who has been brought up in, say, the Ku Klux Klan environment. As you know, it is a very racist organization - they’re against the blacks and so forth. Now what would you say to this person if he took the attitude you just described. ‘There is no point in shopping around. I’ll just stay within the Ku Klux Klan and try to improve it!’ It’s not very convincing, is it?”

Dominic: “Oh, well, I think that through a discernment process ... I mean, there are a lot of things that I haven’t accepted without discernment. There are a lot of things which I do accept within the Church, like on a Sunday we would all stand there and say the Creed together - I mean, that’s something which links us all together, including all the beliefs that we have within the Church. But that’s something which I haven’t just accepted and just rattled off every Sunday. That’s

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

something which I have discerned about and said to myself, 'Well, if I'm going to say these things on a Sunday, then I've got to really believe in it'. And if there is someone within the Ku Klux Klan, then they need to discern and ask themselves, 'What is the Ku Klux Klan really on about?', and really look into it. And they shouldn't just look at the authoritative figures within the organization, but they should work out just where it is that they themselves are coming from and what part they play in all of it. And I think that through a discernment process - an honest, sincere, genuine discernment process, which is not on about power or selfish gain - then I don't think we can go wrong. I think that you fellows would go through this as well. I mean, it seems to me that you both don't believe in organised religion. Would that be a fair comment?"

David: "Yes, and that's because the most important thing in life is to come to genuine understanding of reality oneself. In other words, before you can even choose which religion to follow you have to become wise. Take the Gospels, for example. You have to become wise yourself before you can even understand them, otherwise you'll only misinterpret them."

Dominic: "Okay, but the thing is, there are a lot of things which we can't do on our own. We have to acknowledge our own limitations. We are not perfect beings ..."

Kevin: "Speak for yourself!"

[Laughter]

Dominic: "... would you say that you are perfect beings, Kevin or David?"

Kevin: "Well, I'm not fully aware of my own limitations ... No, I think a lot of limitations are self-imposed."

Dominic: "That's probably correct."

Kevin: "For example, I can't get up out of this seat and fly around in the air. This is a limitation. I haven't got wings."

Dominic: "But you wouldn't say it was a self-imposed limitation, surely, that you haven't got wings?"

Kevin: "That's right. But as far as knowledge goes, as far as my understanding of the nature of Ultimate Reality is concerned, my mind is not limited. A lot of people's minds are limited, but those limitations are self-imposed."

Dominic: "Okay, but I think a lot of people have the idea that when you are part of an organized religion, you almost lose a freedom there - a freedom of discerning yourself, or something. But the thing is, within the Catholic Church, there are many forms of devotion, and different ways of praying, and certainly different spiritualities. There is room for all those spiritualities there."

Kevin: "Is there room for Buddhist spirituality as a Catholic priest? If you decided that the Buddhist philosophy was the best one and believed that there was no God, that nothing can ever be created, that there's no free-will, that everything is a matter of karma or cause-and-effect ... all this is totally incompatible with everything the Pope teaches, isn't it? Do you think that this would be accepted within the Catholic Church?"

Dominic: "No. I mean, if you're a priest and you believe there's not a God, then you've got to really question what you're doing there."

Kevin: "They're doing that in the Anglican Church, aren't they? There are some priests who have actually decided that there is no God and they are still Anglican priests. The Catholic Church hasn't quite reached this level of advancement. Maybe in the years to come ..."

David: "It comes down to your values. If it's your goal to become perfectly truthful and if you want to gain a perfect understanding of reality, then joining a Christian Church will not help you. This is why I speak against Christianity, or indeed, against all the organized religions, because they don't encourage people to strive for perfection."

Dominic: "Okay, could I just say that ... you and Kevin certainly share some ideas which are common. I mean, would you not say that there is something organized between the two of you? You both come together, you share in something which is real to yourselves ..."

David: "Yes, but there are no rituals or anything of that nature. We are just two individual thinkers--"

Dominic: "But there could be a ritual there, in the sense that you, say, gather on a Saturday afternoon and have a sausage and a beer together."

David: "Yes, but we are still two individual thinkers. This is the main thing. We don't

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

submit to any doctrine, or any authority, or anything at all, except our own reasoning processes. Do you see? There is a complete difference."

Kevin: "I think it's to do with the acceptance of authority. Organized religion, as we've been calling it, can be characterized as respecting an authority. This is where the traditional idea of faith comes in - they have faith that what the authority says is true. And this is what individual thinkers never do. Individual thinkers do not respect any authority other than their own mind and their own intelligence. And they do this because they believe that their own mind and their own intelligence are not limited."

Dominic: "Okay, but surely, though, in your individual thinking, there must have been a stage where you wanted to share your information with somebody else - just to see if you're not alone."

Kevin: "Yes, but the more faith that you have in your own mind, the less need you have of approval, or to share. You have less need for external things. You become self-sufficient, in a sense, just as the Universe, for example, or the Totality, is self-sufficient. An individual thinker becomes like the Totality; he becomes, I would say, like God. When you become like the Totality, and you realize that there is nothing other than your own self, you become self-sufficient. When you realize that there is nothing beyond the grasp of your own intelligence and your own reasoning ... even saying this, the statement that there is nothing beyond the grasp of my own reasoning, I'm grasping everything that could possibly be."

Clyde: "And what influenced your reasoning, Kevin?"

Kevin: "The desire for perfection."

Clyde: "What about experiences? What about your experiences since your early childhood, the people you've met ...?"

Kevin: "From very early on, I was brought up as an idealist. I decided that I wanted to achieve something great. I had many opportunities and been successful in various fields, but they didn't satisfy me. The one thing that satisfied me, and the one thing which was permanent, was this knowledge of Ultimate Reality."

Dominic: "Okay, but can't we say that that is simply *your* journey from childhood and

that it reflects the Christian journey? Except that the Christian names God as this ..."

Kevin: "Authority. This is the difference. A religious person submits to an authority - whether it be the Bible or a guru. He has somebody telling him something of which he has no full knowledge himself, but which he accepts on faith. It may be that a whim, or a gut feeling, is telling him that this is the right direction to take. He can smell something in the air and so he follows it, and it may take him to a hamburger or whatever. He doesn't know where it's taking him; he's just following the smell. But this is not the way that an individual thinker does things. Or, in a sense, he does have a nose for what is true, but he follows his internal guide. He has no books to tell him what is true; he has no guru and no teacher. I would argue that a truly spiritual person - a true priest - is such a person. He can speak with his own authority and his own knowledge. So if you want to go out into the community as a priest and be a good example to the general public, then I would argue that the totally individual thinker is the best priest."

Dominic: "Yes, but the thing is, don't we ... but as human beings, don't we ... look, there's a great line out of *Shadowlands* by C.S. Lewis which says, 'We read so we know we are not alone'. Don't you think something like that is true? We pick up books and we read them and we go, 'My God, this person has travelled this journey like I have!'. So we read to know that we are not alone, and we are helped along on our journey there. And then all of a sudden we pick up the Bible, and we think, 'This rings so true with my life, and with where I want to be and how I want to live my life. To me this is Truth'. As an individual thinker, I think there is a stage where you need the contact of other people and you need the contact of people who have travelled before you."

Clyde: "And I just want to say that if we think we have reached a certain stage, and are individuals at a certain stage, isn't it the case that we've actually acquired all our information through books, through people, throughout our journey in life, and what we have in here now is through the contact of people. So, really, it hasn't been individual at all. It has been with people. And so this goes back to organizations as such."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "Well, again, it comes down to your goal in life. If you want to have this perfection of knowledge, this knowledge of reality, then you have to get rid of attachments. And so with things like books and people, although they can be stimulating, to get attached to them is to actually turn away."

Clyde: "Let me just end by giving you a saying by a great thinker of the Church, St Anselm, back in the twelfth century, and it goes, 'Faith seeks understanding'; and since

then scientists, great scientists, have qualified this by saying, 'Understanding seeks faith'."

David: "Assuming, of course, understanding is possible. Anyway, I think we'll have to leave it there, gentlemen. Thanks Dominic Kelly and Clyde Cosentino."

Dominic: "Thanks, David. Thanks, Kevin."

Clyde: "Thank you, David and Kevin."

David: "And we'll be back next time on 4RPH. Bye for now."⁵⁵

THE NATURE OF EXISTENCE

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -
Copyright (c) 1995 Kevin Solway & David Quinn
10th September, 1995

Guest: Mitchell Porter (of Internet fame)

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

David: "Hello, and welcome to what is probably the only radio program in the world which actually caters for geniuses - *The Hour of Judgment*. My name is David Quinn and alongside me is Kevin Solway, and tonight we'll be examining the nature of existence. That is, how do things exist? Can things really exist in their own right? Can there be an objective reality? Or is mind necessary for the existence for things? And to help us in this we've invited along an interesting fellow, called Mitchell Porter. You'd describe yourself, Mitchell, as - I've got it here - 'a transhumanist and internet personality, whose immediate goal is The Theory of Everything'."

Mitchell: "Hmm, hmm."

David: "That's rather a mouthful. Do you want to elaborate on that?"

Mitchell: "Well, transhumanism, first of all, is the idea that the human condition can be transcended and should be transcended. The idea is that, by virtue of being human, we have limitations, such as our lifespan, our faculties, our intelligence, and that we should take means to improve."

David: "So you're thinking along technological lines, are you?"

Mitchell: "Well, they seem to be the most powerful ones in prospect."

David: "But not the only ones."

Mitchell: "No."

David: "And do you do any work in this field yourself, or what?"

Mitchell: "No, I had ambitions to do so at one time. It was part of my 'Internet personality' - trying to lead such campaigns. But it got me to naught. So I'm now following the second goal which you mentioned - The Theory of Everything."

David: "Right, and that's what interests me more, actually, this Theory of Everything, because it seems to relate to ultimate knowledge, or to gaining an understanding of real-

ity. Now Kevin and I claim this for a goal as well. Each week, over the various programs, we have been saying that our goal is the understanding of reality, but I suspect that we're talking about two different things here."

Mitchell: "Quite possibly."

David: "What do you mean by it?"

Mitchell: "What do I mean? I mean finding a notion of what it is that exists, which is adequate to the facts. So I conceive of what it is to be known as being the set of all facts - all those things which are true of reality."

David: "So this is science you're talking about ...?"

Mitchell: "Well, science might tell us about some of those facts, but I think there's a place for conceptual analysis as well."

David: "It sounds to me a bit like the traditional Western philosophical goal - a system of knowledge which explains everything."

Mitchell: "Yes."

David: "So you're really a traditional philosopher in a way."

Mitchell: "Perhaps."

David: "Would you say that ultimate certainty is your goal?"

Mitchell: "I have to say I don't think it's a realistic goal. It sounds attractive, so long as you're not fooling yourself. But when it comes to certain sorts of facts I do not see how one can be certain of them."

David: "So you're saying that no-one can ever come to an ultimate understanding of reality? I mean, you say that your goal is the understanding of reality - but not certainty."

Mitchell: "Well ... because I do not see how certainty can be achieved."

Kevin: "So what role, Mitchell, do you think the word 'certainty' has? In what situations would you yourself use the word 'certainty'?"

Mitchell: "In most situations I would describe a thing as 'certain' if it seemed reasonable that it was so. But on a philosophical plane I have to say that any hypothesis might be wrong. So there is an absolute sense in which everything is uncertain. But then

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

there's the question of what it is that you will actually think is the case."

Kevin: "All right, let's take the idea that everything is uncertain. Would you say that that itself is certain?"

Mitchell: "No."

Kevin: "So the idea that everything is uncertain is itself uncertain."

Mitchell: "Yes."

David: "So you're open to the possibility that certainty is possible?"

Mitchell: "Yes."

David: "So this belief that nothing is certain and that no-one can come to an understanding of ultimate certainty ... you're not really sure of it?"

Mitchell: "Indeed."

David: "It's just your surmise at this stage ... ?"

Mitchell: "Yes, because when I look at how the world seems to be first of all, I can then think of other ways that the world could have been and still present the same aspect. And I do not see how one could exclude those sorts of ideas. Now this makes me uncomfortable, but it's a common perception amongst physicists, for example, who do not see any violations of the physical laws, but nonetheless they have to admit the possibility that behind their backs, so to speak, at some point in the past when they weren't looking, some process occurred which did not conform to those universally observed regularities."

David: "Right, so scientists are doomed forever to this failure, or this inherent uncertainty, in their work. But, Kevin, we claim an ultimate certainty, don't we. How would you say this differs from the scientists?"

Kevin: "There's two kinds of certainty - two spheres of knowledge. One sphere of knowledge is empirical scientific knowledge, and in this I'd include most of everyday life. Most of what people do is in fact empirical, in the sense that it is to do with appearances, it is to do with objects in the material world. But there's another sphere of knowledge, and that's the sphere of logical knowledge, which is a knowledge of definitions. It's a knowledge that is ... I suppose you could almost describe it as mathematical. In a very simple sense, for example, if I define a bicycle as having two wheels then I can state as an absolute certainty that the bicycle has two

wheels. Does this kind of certainty interest you, Mitchell?"

Mitchell: "Yes, because I think that logical knowledge is part of the set of facts about reality. So it's a fact that if there was a bicycle then it would have two wheels, by the way you've defined it. But it is a matter of empirical fact as to whether there are any bicycles in the first place. And I don't see how logical knowledge pertains to that question - of whether there have been bicycles in the history of the world."

Kevin: "Right, but if bicycles, or anything in fact ... if a thing appears to us, and it is useful to us, then surely for practical purposes we can say that the thing exists. Whether it *really* exists is not relevant. What is truly relevant is what appears to us and what we can make use of."

Mitchell: "Well, I consider it important - this question of what it is that's real. I grant that we are confined to appearances, if you include not only perceptual appearances but also appearances of intellect - impressions as to what reality is. And that's why I attach importance to the principle of total uncertainty, because I see it as a matter of logical knowledge and not something that you can prove by experiment. Nonetheless, it's still a matter of fact as to whether or not there were bicycles in the world, and it's something you can try to find out about through the usual scientific method."

Kevin: "Yes. Whether things exist or not depends in fact on how we define them to be. We define a bicycle in a certain way. If we perceived the world in a different way these bicycles may not exist. They may actually merge into some other objects - they might just be part of the earth, for example. We may not perceive them to be anything different from just the earth in general. Therefore, they would exist if we wanted to find them, but our senses and our minds may not see any reason for their existence. I would place this kind of knowledge as being fundamental to any kind of understanding of reality."

Mitchell: "If you're going to find something you're going to have to look for it ... ?"

Kevin: "The subjective element. Things will only exist if we make them exist."

Mitchell: "Well, I would disagree."

Kevin: "The reason is our senses make things exist, to some extent. Our senses have

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

evolved in a certain way which places boundaries around things. For example, our consciousness has evolved to see contrasts in light and shade, to see contrasts in certain wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum. If we had different senses we would see different boundaries and therefore existence itself would change."

Mitchell: "Our *experience* of existence would change. Now amongst the set of all facts about reality are the facts about what we experience. But I would say they're not the whole set of facts, even about material reality."

David: "I think we should make a distinction. You're saying, Kevin, that it's our conceptualizing mind which creates objects ... which actually creates their existence."

Kevin: "Exactly. For example, if we had no senses whatsoever - if we never perceived any boundaries, and also if we had no consciousness which was capable of creating logical boundaries - then no existence would occur to us, and therefore there would be no existence."

David: "Right, so this is different from saying that things are created by our whims. You know, people might think that if things are created by our minds, then if I have a whim to make this chair disappear it'll then suddenly disappear!"

Kevin: "Yes, I'm not saying that things are merely created by our whims."

David: "It's a complete difference."

Mitchell: "But this is what it sounds like though."

Kevin: "Maybe, but nonetheless--"

Mitchell: "If we are caused to not see the chair there, then the chair is not there?"

Kevin: "Yes, but that's different from a whim."

Mitchell: "But it's still saying that the existence of the chair is dependent upon what it is that we perceive, and I categorically disagree with that."

David: "But it's not dependent on our whims."

Mitchell: "Yes, it could be the result of a brain defect."

David: "Whatever, but what we call 'objective reality' is just things which are not immediately subject to our whims. For example, we can't wish the sky out of existence just like that. It seems to be permanent and

independent of our ideas of it in a way. But this is different from our saying that our minds are a necessary cause of the sky. Without mind there can be no sky."

Mitchell: "Are you agreeing that without mind there can be no sky?"

Kevin: "Well, that definitely is the case, because 'sky' only means something in relation to other appearances. The "sky" means something in relation to, say, the "horizon". So without any of these appearances there can be no horizon, there can be no earth, there can be no sky."

Mitchell: "Well, in the case of the sky, that could be an observer-dependent concept, since you're on the ground looking up. But in the case of the earth ... the earth is an aggregate of atoms held together by gravitation."

Kevin: "But it also is an appearance to us, and it exists relative to other appearances. The earth exists relative to the sun and relative to space. So everything which appears to us is dependent on a whole range of other appearances, and without the appearance of any of those things, things would not exist."

Mitchell: "You said that the earth is an appearance. I would say that the earth *presents* an appearance. It's one of the earth's properties, when there are observers there, but it's a property which is independent of the earth's *being*."

David: "So you're saying that the earth can exist independently of mind?"

Mitchell: "Yes."

David: "But this is an hypothesis on your part."

Kevin: "This is actually meaningless without--"

David: "Well, let's first establish that it's an hypothesis."

Mitchell: "Yes, because there are philosophers like Berkeley who hold that to 'be' is to be perceived and that you couldn't have things which weren't being perceived--"

David: "So this idea of an independent existence is just an *idea* to help explain what we see around us. Now you were going to say it's meaningless, Kevin, but it's also *irrational* ... same thing, at bottom."

Kevin: "Well, it's an hypothesis, granted, but it holds no water because any kind of earth that we can conceive of has attributes and has properties, all of which appear to our senses--"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Mitchell: "No. If I conceive of the earth as containing an inordinately large number of atoms, then this is a property which does not appear to anyone."

Kevin: "It appears to our mind."

Mitchell: "But what if I stipulate that my hypothetical earth is not perceived by anyone, and it's part of the concept that it is not seen?"

Kevin: "Well, it's still perceived by your mind, isn't it."

David: "It's an hypothesis, nothing more than that."

Mitchell: "Well, this isn't even an hypothesis, since I'm not really advancing that the earth has these properties. There are observers who have seen the earth, and, according to my theory, the earth was there before it was seen, and it had properties in that time."

Kevin: "But you're actually perceiving it. Let's use a slightly different example - the Universe itself. Now most people think of the Universe as having existed long before there was human life on this planet - and obviously the Universe existed before human life evolved. It seems likely the Universe existed before consciousness evolved. But the thing is we are *conceiving* of the Universe as having existed before there was consciousness, and it's that conceiving of existence which gives rise to existence. If no being ever conceives of existence, then existence never comes about."

David: "So are you suggesting, Kevin, that if everybody suddenly believed that there was no Universe before human life, then that would be the reality?"

Kevin: "That would be the reality because reality is only what we talk about and what appears to us."

David: "It sounds as though you're saying one minute there was a Big Bang fifteen billion years ago, and the next minute there was no Big Bang fifteen billion years ago, depending on our ideas of what happened back then."

Kevin: "Yes, reality changes depending on what the mind informs us."

David: "So there's no objective Big Bang? Is this what you're saying?"

Kevin: "There's none that we can know of. It all comes down to definitions again."

David: "But that's not saying that there wasn't one - or are you saying something

stronger? Are you saying that there can't be *anything* beyond the mind - whether it be existence or non-existence?"

Kevin: "There can't be anything independent of the mind."

David: "Either Big Bang or not Big Bang."

Kevin: "Even if we conceive of things which are independent of the mind, the very fact that we're conceiving of them makes them dependent, because they have no existence outside of our minds. Any world that we can conceive of exists inside our minds."

David: "Well, people would argue that the Big Bang didn't depend on any human consciousness at all, because there were no humans back then. You know, it just exploded! Doesn't that defeat your argument?"

Kevin: "It actually agrees with my argument because they are imagining the Big Bang. They are coming up with the concept of 'Big Bang'; they have the words 'Big Bang'; they have an idea of what they mean; they perceive something in their visual cortex, presumably--"

David: "So you're saying that everything is an appearance, and we can't get beyond the appearances."

Kevin: "That's right. I'm not saying that things don't exist. I'm saying that existence and non-existence are created by the mind. So, ultimately, you can't really say that things exist, and you can't really say they don't exist."

David: "So what created the mind?"

Kevin: "It doesn't matter really, does it? The mind is just a concept."

David: "But if you're saying it's an absolute truth that all things are created by mind, then the next obvious question is: 'Where does mind come from?'"

Kevin: "Mind itself comes from mind."

David: "So are you saying there's an infinite regression here?"

Kevin: "All we need to know is that things have causes. Mitchell, what do you think about cause and effect? Do you believe that everything has a cause? Have you given it any thought?"

Mitchell: "I think there are causes for some things but not for others."

Kevin: "And what would be an example of something that doesn't have a cause?"

Mitchell: "The fact that there's something rather than nothing - or, as Leibniz put it, the

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Universe exists. There is something there. Reality exists."

David: "The totality."

Mitchell: "Yes."

David: "Right, but that couldn't really be classed as a thing, could it? Obviously, 'everything' can't have a cause."

Mitchell: "Well, it's a thing if you allow sets to be things, collections to be things."

David: "But 'everything' can't have a cause."

Mitchell: "The original question was, 'Do you think everything has a cause?' I'm saying no because the totality of things doesn't have a cause as far as I can see."

David: "And I'm saying that this 'thing' is not really a thing because there's nothing beyond it."

Mitchell: "Well, there's nothing other than it."

David: "Yes, it's infinite."

Mitchell: "Well, that's an hypothesis."

David: "No, by infinite I mean that there's nowhere where you can say that it ends."

Kevin: "It's a definition. 'Everything' by definition is infinite, because 'everything' has no limit."

Mitchell: "No, what about the things which don't exist, and situations which are never realized?"

Kevin: "Like I say, 'everything' includes *everything*. It includes all possibilities. Anything which can be conceived of is included in the concept of 'everything', and so it is by definition infinite. We can talk about 'it', but it's not truly a thing."

Mitchell: "Well, suppose that I'm talking about every actual thing - things which actually exist--"

David: "But what about the actual potentialities as well - the actual possibilities? You see, it just comes down to how you look at it. Kevin is talking about 'everything' - nothing excluded at all."

Mitchell: "Well, I think that the possibilities that aren't realized don't exist. The fact of the possibility exists, but it's not the thing itself."

David: "So what's your point? You're trying to argue that the totality is a thing?"

Mitchell: "Yes, and that the totality does not have a cause. Now you seem willing to agree that it doesn't have a cause, but you say that the totality is not a 'thing'."

David: "Yes, and *because* it's not a thing it doesn't have a cause."

Kevin: "But there's a big difference between ordinary things which appear to us in everyday life - cups of coffee and microphones and so on - and the totality. Ordinary things have causes, obviously ... well, I don't know ... Mitchell, would you agree that ordinary things have causes? I'm not talking about the totality - just ordinary things in everyday life."

Mitchell: "I would class that as an hypothesis."

Kevin: "Give me an example of something which doesn't have a cause."

Mitchell: "No, I'll give you an example of why I class this as an hypothesis. An example of a causal explanation in physics is that a thing drops because of the gravitational attraction. So you could have a completely law-abiding Universe which conforms to gravitational laws, and this would be a possible state of affairs - the way that the Universe could have been. But, by this principle of total uncertainty, the Universe could have had a blip in its program, so to speak. There could have been a period where the gravitational laws didn't operate. Now in that case you still would have had things occurring, but since the gravitational law doesn't hold universally, it doesn't seem you can say that mass is the cause of gravity - because if it was, then it would apply invariably."

David: "Well, this new behaviour was caused by the blip."

Mitchell: "No, the blip was the new behaviour. The blip was the period where the normal behaviour didn't occur. This is Hume's argument: instead of 'cause', we have a constant conjunction of things."

Kevin: "But remember there's two spheres of knowledge here. There's the empirical scientific knowledge where we can't say anything with certainty, but there's also the logical knowledge as well. Now have you given any thought to the idea that things *logically* have causes? Or do you think that things are logically independent of causes?"

Mitchell: "Well, I don't know if 'cause' is the right term for logical relations. I mean, your logical truths - where something is true by definition--"

Kevin: "Well, let's take something like a cup. It is dependent on certain things; its

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

existence is dependent on certain things. It is dependent on what makes it - whatever that may be. For example, it's made up of certain parts. Now I can divide a cup up into halves or quarters, and without those components the cup wouldn't exist. So an example of a logical cause would be to say that the parts of the cup are the cause of the cup, because the cup wouldn't exist without its parts."

Mitchell: "Well, I call that a precondition, but that's perhaps a terminological distinction."

David: "If you define 'cause' in an absolute sense, and in a broadly sweeping sense, that something depends on something else, then without one thing the other thing can't exist. So without the parts of a cup there can't be a cup."

Mitchell: "It's not a sufficient cause, though. You could have the parts without the cup."

David: "Right, but it's still a necessary cause."

Kevin: "Also, a cup can't exist without its attributes. Without all the things which appear to us--"

David: "The solidness and the colour and so on."

Kevin: "Yes, without those things the cup wouldn't exist."

Mitchell: "Yes, so long as those attributes are part of the definition of 'cup'."

David: "So the attributes are a necessary cause. Then would you agree, Mitchell, that everything must be like this? Things must depend on their parts, their attributes, space, and so on."

Mitchell: "Well, the interesting thing here is that if all those things count as causes, then we have this question why does everything exist? Why is there something there?"

David: "Why the totality?"

Mitchell: "Well, perhaps its not the totality, but just the fact that *something* exists. That's more where I'd focus."

David: "We should look at this problem, because it's a common one: Why is there something and not nothing?"

Kevin: "Well, let's go back again and let's stop talking about 'everything' as being a thing. Because it's a valid question to ask why a particular thing exists - why a coffee cup exists - but it's not valid to ask why 'everything' is, as it has nothing to be compared to."

rything' is, as it has nothing to be compared to."

Mitchell: "Except for that which does not exist."

Kevin: "Well, that which doesn't exist, doesn't exist! Non-existence is just a concept anyway and is therefore part of the totality."

Mitchell: "The concept of 'non-existence' exists, but non-existence itself doesn't exist."

Kevin: "... Non-existence doesn't exist ...?"

Mitchell: "By definition."

David: "Phew! That's a brain teaser!"

Kevin: "No, we can't think about what doesn't exist."

David: "This 'non-existence', since it can be conceived of, necessarily has some kind of existence."

Kevin: "The totality, by definition, includes everything that can be conceived of - including 'non-existence'."

Mitchell: "I will qualify what I said, in that contextual non-existence does exist in the sense that it happens. Hypothetically, there are no elephants in this booth with us, so there is a form of non-existence there, in a manner of speaking."

David: "Right, so there's an infinite number of non-existences in this room, because there's an infinite number of forms that aren't here."

Mitchell: "But again, it's a manner of speaking."

David: "That's right, it's a concept that we use."

Mitchell: "But in the sense of *total non-existence* - that is, nothing at all existing anywhere - I would say that is not the case."

David: "So what's your question?"

Kevin: "No, no, I think Mitchell was saying that non-existence is something separate from the totality."

David: "Or that there can be such a state as non-existence - total non-existence."

Mitchell: "Well, if you could establish that there couldn't be - well, then you've answered Leibniz's question. So why couldn't there have been *nothing*?"

David: "Because the very concept of nothing means 'absence of something'. You couldn't have the nothing without the something, otherwise 'nothing' would be meaningless."

Mitchell: "So 'nothing' is the same as 'absence of something' ...?"

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

David: "That's what it means, by definition."

Mitchell: "So if there was nothing there would be something. ...?"

Kevin: "Exactly."

David: "Yes, so we've proved Leibniz wrong there."

Kevin: "And the totality includes both of those polar opposites. Both nothing and something, or existence and non-existence, are included in the totality."

David: "So I wouldn't regard the totality, or Reality, as being either a something or a nothing. They're both wrong. So the whole question of 'Why something?' is wrong. It's a meaningless question because it's not a 'something'."

Kevin: You can't explain the totality by anything because anything which could explain it would actually be part of the totality. It's like the question, "Where did God come from?" I mean, if God was created by someone then the one who created Him must be God. And then you can ask the question where did this God come from . . . The totality includes everything, so you can't ask the question--

Mitchell: Well, you can.

Kevin: You can, but you can't ask it rationally.

Mitchell: So this is why I say there's something without a cause. There is a fact without a cause, a fact without an explanation.

David: Yes, as long as you don't conceive of it as a thing.

Mitchell: That's why I call it a *fact* - a fact which has no explanation.

Kevin: No, you can't conceive of it as a fact, either.

Mitchell: Why not? There is the fact that something exists. I'm not saying that the fact is everything, but that it's a fact about reality.

Kevin: The totality itself is not a fact.

Mitchell: I'm not saying the totality is a fact. I'm just saying this is a fact about reality - and the fact is that something exists.

Kevin: Okay, but you can't say it exists. You can't say the totality exists.

Mitchell: Well, I didn't actually say the totality exists, just that something exists. But why can't I say the totality exists?

Kevin: Well, like I was saying before, we can say that things exist in a scientific way, and we can investigate why they exist for

practical purposes. For any object in reality we can ask these questions quite validly.

Mitchell: Do you mean, "Does it exist or not?"

Kevin: No, I mean why it exists. It exists because we can darn well see the thing and it plays a part in our lives - therefore it exists.

Mitchell: Ah, but wait. If we see a cup, perhaps we are justified in assuming there is something there. But our concept of the cup could be wrong.

Kevin: It doesn't matter. Whatever appears to us we can validly ask questions about.

Mitchell: Indeed.

Kevin: But the totality itself doesn't appear to us . . .

David: It's an abstract concept.

Kevin: Yes, it's an abstraction, and because it is infinite - has no limits, and has nothing outside it - there's no non-existence outside of it, there's no consciousness outside of it. It is everything. We cannot sanely ask the question: Where did it come from? Because it's not an "it".

David: Likewise, you can't even *ask* for an explanation. The whole thing of requiring an explanation is wrong. The totality transcends all these things.

Kevin: I think we should have a short break here to catch our breath.

David: What have we got?

Kevin: Some thinking music.

[MUSIC BREAK]

David: Now, Mitchell, are you suggesting that the totality - which doesn't have an explanation, obviously, because causes go back forever - are you saying that we're lacking knowledge here, or that there is an inherent flaw in the totality? Is there a flaw in the scheme of things concerning the fact that we can't explain the totality?

Mitchell: No, I'm not saying it's a flaw. I'm just saying it's a fact.

David: But you're still asking, "Why something? Why this process of cause and effect?"

Mitchell: Yes.

David: Now I'd say that this is meaningless, because when we ask the question "Why?", then we're really asking what causes something. When we ask, "Why is the cup here?", we're really asking *what* caused the cup to be here. So when you say, "Why this cause and effect process?", you're really

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

asking what causes the cause and effect process.

Mitchell: Yes.

David: And you can see at once that the question falls on its face.

Mitchell: Well, because we can't conceive of an answer.

David: No, because it's logically invalid. It's logically meaningless because you're trying to explain the process of cause and effect via a cause.

Mitchell: So, in other words, there is no cause for the existence of cause and effect?

David: And no not-cause. The whole thing is meaningless. So the totality of cause and effect transcends every attempt to even *begin* to ask this question. It's wrong to even begin to ask where it came from or why it's here.

Mitchell: Well, I have to say it sounds like obfuscation to me. I mean, "It's wrong to even begin to ask the question."!

David: Yes, it's logically meaningless. We're not evading anything here. It's just a logical truth that the totality of cause and effect can't have any outside cause, because whatever you postulate as an outside cause is part of that process of cause and effect.

Mitchell: Yes, but "cause" seems to mean reasons as well. You know, a cause is the reason why it is so.

David: Okay.

Mitchell: And so we go back to this "something exists", and there's no reason why.

David: What exists?

Mitchell: Something.

David: What?

Mitchell: The cup, the world, consciousness . . .

David: Yes, but not the totality.

Mitchell: The totality doesn't exist? All the things which make it up exist, but the totality itself doesn't exist?

David: Well, obviously - I mean, ultimately - even the things within, which we call existing, have no ultimate existence.

Mitchell: Obviously?

Kevin: Let's go back to that question before. All the things which exist inside the totality exist because they exist relative to other things. But when you are talking about the totality itself, there are no other things. That's why the totality is composed of things which exist, but the totality itself cannot be

said to exist. Existence is purely existence relative to something else. So even though it might sound superficially unbelievable that the totality is indeed composed of lots of things which exist, but which doesn't exist itself, nonetheless, this is logically, necessarily, the case.

Mitchell: I don't believe in this relative existence. An existence is an absolute thing. A thing either is or it isn't.

David: Right, and so?

Mitchell: Well, Kevin was saying that things which exist exist relative to other things. They may exist in certain relations to them, but that's not the same thing as there being relative existence.

Kevin: No, it's impossible, logically, for a thing to not exist relative to other things, because if there's any kind of a boundary perceived - it doesn't matter what you're conceiving of; a cup, for example, has a perceived boundary - if there's any kind of limitation to the thing . . . I mean, absolutely any concept at all has a boundary to it, and outside of that boundary is something else - something other than the thing that is perceived. So whenever something exists there is always something other than itself. For example, just postulate a thing called "A", then immediately there's "not-A". When there's a number two, there's also a number one and a number three. The number two doesn't exist without the number one and the number three. So in this way all of these things exist relatively.

Mitchell: Well, no, I disagree. There are relations between them. "A" is not "not-A". "Not-A" is not "A". One is not two. Two is not three.

David: But the two things must arise together. You can see that if there is no "not-A", then there can't be an "A". They're dependent on each other for their existence.

Kevin: There must be one for there to be the other and vice-versa. So there's always going to be at least two things.

David: So what you're saying, Kevin, is that nothing can exist in its own right?

Kevin: Exactly.

David: And you disagree with this, Mitchell?

Mitchell: Well, it depends by what we mean by "in its own right".

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

David: I mean *completely* independent, where it doesn't depend on anything whatsoever for its existence.

Kevin: So it doesn't even depend on there being something other than itself.

Mitchell: Well, the totality seems to be the one thing that gets along without anything else.

David: That's right.

Kevin: And that's why we say it doesn't exist.

Mitchell: But if we could focus on something more concrete, like the cup. Since we are talking about hypothetical situations, we're saying that the "cup" can't be without "everything other than the cup". Now I put it to you that this cup is here in this world. Could the world have got along without, say, one of the atoms in this desk?

Kevin: Look at it this way. Everything in this world which is other than this cup - let's give it a name and call it "not-cup"; that's everything in the world which is not the cup, and it doesn't matter what it actually is, for this illustration - the fact is we have two things here. We have "cup" and we have "not-cup". Those two things are intimately related to each other. So much so that one would not exist without the other.

Mitchell: Although "not-cup" could be different from the way it actually is?

Kevin: It doesn't matter. Ignore what "not-cup" actually is. The fact is we've given it a name - it exists - and the cup exists. So these two are intimately related.

Mitchell: Okay, so let us suppose I say there is no possible world in which there is a cup without there being anything else. What's the significance of that conclusion?

Kevin: Well, it means that all things which exist, exist relative to other things.

Mitchell: Not that they have relations to one another, like this one is nearer than that one?

Kevin: Relative just means dependent. The cup doesn't exist unless there is something which is not the cup. You see, it's important to understand the difference between this dualistic knowledge, which is the realm of science, and ultimate knowledge, which is the realm of the highest philosophy.

Mitchell: Well, in the case of the cup, what is it that the cup is dependent on? You said it doesn't matter whether "not-cup" can change

or not, but I think it does if you're trying to be precise about what it is that the cup depends on.

Kevin: Well, "not-cup" actually can't change, because it's just one thing, and we've given it a name - it's one object. It's a logical entity. It's a black box. You don't need to know what's inside it.

David: It's just for the purpose of illustrating this duality. We don't need to know anything more about it because we're just concentrating on this division of "cup" and "not-cup".

Kevin: Reality is really this simple. Boundaries are wherever we choose to draw them. I mean, if we're really thirsty, all that exists is the coffee that we're drinking or the water that we're drinking. The rest of the Universe doesn't exist as far as we're concerned - and so in reality it doesn't exist. The only thing which exists for a man who is dying of thirst is water. And that's reality. He doesn't care how galaxies are changing in a possible other Universe.

Mitchell: Or even in his own. But they are still there changing.

Kevin: Only if he can conceive of them. All of these things are not independent of concepts. They can't exist without concepts.

David: So all the complexity that we see around us is composed of this simple duality.

Kevin: In the short time we have left I think we should talk about the importance of the mind in placing boundaries on things. You know how it's the fashion these days for scientists, physicists especially, to be interested in this Theory of Everything. This theory may come in a simple form, as a simple formula, or it may come as a twenty volume set of theories which are interrelated - but I really think the whole thing is a joke. Because depending on how we want to look at the world, depending on how we want to categorize things, depending on where we want to place the boundaries, everything changes. For example, someone may devote their whole life to coming up with a Theory of Everything - a twenty volume set - but that person has certain goals and values in life which will influence where he places boundaries, in what he chooses to call a coffee cup, for example.

David: But that doesn't change the empirical properties of what we call entities. We

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

can look at a cup in a thousand different ways, but it's still going to sit there and hold water.

Mitchell: Indeed. The true Theory of Everything should tell you the results of every possible way of drawing boundaries.

Kevin: Well, in that case the Theory of Everything would have to include an infinite number of volumes of books, and it would actually have to include the whole Universe itself.

Mitchell: No, not if it can be reduced to a simple formula. Because, in that case, what you do is work out the implications of this formula for a particular way of drawing boundaries.

Kevin: Yes, but you see, any formula is itself a set of boundaries. No matter what the formula contains, it contains symbols which refer to something.

Mitchell: "Okay, so the formula is supposed to refer to reality. So it may say something like: there exists these types of particles which interact in these ways--"

Kevin: "Regardless, it doesn't matter what things are referred to, somebody else can look at those same things and they will see something different, depending on the way that they're looking at it, depending on what they're interested in. They may be a biologist, or a sociologist, or a psychologist--"

Mitchell: "But all those perceptions, all those views which this person develops ... if they are developed and they are seen, then they must be part of the history of the Universe. And therefore if this Theory of Everything truly describes everything, they must fall within the scope of that description."

David: "But the formula would be describing finite things, like particles, and just the fact that you're conceiving of these particles creates gaps in your knowledge. You're actually creating the gaps by dividing the Universe into finite packages."

Kevin: "You're narrowing your vision so that you're seeing the world in this particular way."

David: "It's a bit like Chaos theory in science, when you're trying to measure, for example, the future weather patterns. When you measure what the weather is doing at any moment in time you have to draw a line somewhere. You can only zero-in to a certain degree of accuracy, in which case there's

always a little bit of error in the measurements, because you can't be one hundred percent accurate. For example, when you try to measure the pressure of the atmosphere you can only do so to a certain degree of precision. Now the error multiplies over time, and that's why the weather becomes unpredictable when you look more than a couple of weeks into the future."

Kevin: "And it's the same with any 'Theory of Everything'. There are still going to be things which appear and which have to be taken account of, and those things will have inherent errors in them--"

Mitchell: "Which things?"

Kevin: "Whatever things the theory is about. The theory is going to be about 'things' - it doesn't matter what things they are."

Mitchell: "What are the inherent errors in a theory? David, you talked about creating gaps in our knowledge by our postulating particles ..."

David: "Or things. Finite things."

Mitchell: "Okay, so we create a gap in our knowledge by postulating anything at all?"

David: "Yes."

Mitchell: "And how is that? It seems a harmless enough act to postulate something: one is just allowing that, maybe, this 'thing' is there, along with whatever else one already thinks is there."

David: "Well, it's useful for most purposes. For most practical purposes, conceiving of things as existing is good enough to get by in life. It's good enough for most scientific purposes. But when you come to the Theory of Everything--"

Mitchell: "It would have to tell us all the truths that there are."

David: "Right. So that's where it breaks down."

Mitchell: "Why?"

David: "Because you're trying to cut up what is infinite and put it into something finite. So it creates the gaps."

Kevin: "And it relates to what I was saying before about how you can place these boundaries. You can cut up the Universe in an infinite number of different ways."

Mitchell: "Well, you might not be able to. If the Universe has finitely many constituents, then there will only be a finite number of ways you can cut it up."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "No, when I say "cut up" I'm not talking about materially cutting the Universe up, but mentally cutting the Universe up. Because, in the real world, we don't cut things up materially - we cut them up mentally."

Mitchell: "So there are infinitely many possible - what? - perceptions, opinions?"

Kevin: "There are an infinitely large number of ways of viewing the world which are valid."

David: "Not scientifically ...?"

Kevin: "Yes, scientifically. A way of viewing the world is valid if it helps us to achieve our goals. That's what valid means, basically."

Mitchell: "Valid means 'not corresponds to truth, or what is correct, but what helps us to achieve our goals'?"

Kevin: "What is correct doesn't matter. In science, that which is correct doesn't really matter. Science is concerned about what works. And what works is not necessarily what is correct."

Mitchell: "There can be infinitely many valid points of view, but there's no inherent contradiction between that and the Theory of Everything, which is correct in every particular."

Kevin: "But there are in fact an infinite number of equally valid Theories of Everything. And depending on what a person's values are, and depending on what their goals are in life, they will have a different Theory of Everything."

Mitchell: "But if there's something which they don't know about, and it isn't taken account of in their Theory of Everything, then they're wrong."

David: "Well, you could say that one Theory of Everything is: 'God created everything'."

Mitchell: "Well, that's a theory. But if God didn't, then it's wrong."

Kevin: "Another Theory of Everything is cause and effect. 'Everything has a cause'."

Mitchell: "And if there's something without a cause, then it's wrong."

Kevin: "Exactly. But, as we've discussed, it's impossible for something to exist without a cause. I know you say that the totality is without a cause, but then the totality is not a thing. So I find it funny that the scientists are spending millions of dollars searching for the

Theory of Everything and we already have it! We've known for thousands of years what the Theory of Everything is - and, of course, it is the fact that everything has a cause."

Mitchell: "But it doesn't tell us any particulars."

Kevin: "It does if you extrapolate."

Mitchell: "Cause and effect is *part* of the Theory of Everything at best."

Kevin: "No, it is the one kernel Theory of Everything. And what you'll find is that, as science comes closer and closer to a Theory of Everything, if it does, what you will discover is that the Theory of Everything will come closer and closer to the theory of cause and effect. And when they finally concentrate it down to the ultimate kernel, and the formula gets smaller and smaller--"

David: "Ockham's razor: pht! pht! pht! pht!"

Kevin: "Yes, with Ockham's razor, cause and effect will be the result. I guarantee it."

Mitchell: "Well, there will be cause and effect in the theory presumably."

Kevin: "No, it will be *just* the concept of cause and effect. That's all it will be."

Mitchell: "So there's no need to say that there are human beings, that there are particles, that there are fifteen billion years of history in the Universe?"

Kevin: "Cause and effect is fundamental to all those things."

Mitchell: "Can you deduce the existence of human beings from the notion that cause and effect operates, and nothing else?"

Kevin: "Yes."

Mitchell: "You can get human beings out of that? You don't need any empirical knowledge? You don't need to observe anything?"

Kevin: "That's right. Anything which exists you can arrive at simply with the concept of cause and effect, for the reason that I stated before, that everything exists relative to some other thing. For example, human beings exist relative to what is not human beings. So regardless of anything else ... Ockham's razor ... get rid of all the irrelevant things ..."

Mitchell: "Can you show me how it is that this cup exists just from the law of cause and effect?"

Kevin: "I already have, because I've explained that without everything that is not the cup, the cup would not exist."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Mitchell: "But you don't know that 'not-cup' exists."

David: "By conceiving of the cup, 'not-cup' immediately arises."

Mitchell: "You're talking about conceiving of things."

David: "Well, we're talking about a cup, so we're all conceiving of a cup."

Kevin: "The fact that we have a word 'cup' means that the cup exists."

David: "Yes, and so 'not-cup' is the sole cause of 'cup'."

Kevin: "Yes. I don't think Mitchell likes the idea of these logical truths. We're flipping backwards and forwards between scientific truths and logical truths, as though they were somehow related - which, of course, they are. But most people in the world today think that these things are completely isolated. And in universities, especially, you won't find anyone who considers there to be true relations between empirical science and logical reasoning."

Mitchell: "Well, I think it's unfortunate that you include among your logical truths such things as 'things neither exist nor not exist', and, 'things exist only by virtue of our happening to perceive them'. You're giving logic a bad name here."

David: "Why is that?"

Mitchell: "Because they don't follow logically. The idea that things exist and does not exist violates the idea of the excluded middle, which is an old principle of logic."

David: "The law of contradiction, you mean?"

Mitchell: "No, it's not a contradiction because you haven't actually affirmed anything. You've just said it's neither this nor that."

David: "Yes, so it's just negating delusions."

Mitchell: "It's negating everything."

David: "It's negating false concepts about existence."

Kevin: "There's nothing illogical about negating everything which is false. So if I said that the Universe, or the totality, neither exists and nor not exists, that's not an illogical statement. It's just a negation of what is false."

Mitchell: "And of what is true. Because you said that the Universe does not exist as part of the statement."

Kevin: "I said that neither of them are true."

Mitchell: "Yes, which means that neither of them individually is true. I would say that it's a valid deduction that if the universe neither exists nor not exists, then the Universe does not exist."

David: "That's not valid, because we've already denied that the Universe doesn't exist."

Mitchell: "Your statement was that the Universe neither exists nor does it not exist--"

Kevin: "Stop! There's nowhere further to go."

Mitchell: "I'm not allowed to draw the logical conclusion?"

Kevin: "There is no conclusion. There's nowhere left to go. It's the end of the journey."

Mitchell: "I call it a cul-de-sac."

David: "I call it liberation, actually! It's funny, isn't it ..."

Kevin: "We've a couple of minutes left. Mitchell, do you want to become immortal?"

Mitchell: "Sure, so long as life remains pleasing."

Kevin: "What is it, do you think, that would become immortal?"

Mitchell: "Well, it's not about *becoming* immortal; it's what I already am would continue to exist, and presumably change, radically."

Kevin: "Right, now the fact that you change all the time - from moment to moment you're changing, and in fact everything about you is changing--"

Mitchell: "No."

Kevin: "What isn't changing about you?"

Mitchell: "My constituents, the fact that I exist in space and time--"

Kevin: You mean the concept of your existence in space and time."

Mitchell: "Well, the concept isn't part of me."

David: "So what is this 'you'? What is this something that doesn't exist as a concept?"

Mitchell: "It's the physical individual."

David: "And what's that?"

Mitchell: "It's a system of particles."

Kevin: "But that's in continual flux, isn't it?"

Mitchell: "This is part of my research. You want to be able to establish an absolute criterion as to whether a particular particle is part

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

of a system or not. If you can do that unambiguously then there's no problem in there being flux, so long as the boundaries are always quite distinct."

Kevin: "Right, so let's, for example, take a fountain coming out of a lake. Now the fountain has a certain form. We have a name for the thing, and we call it a 'fountain'. And yet all the things which compose the fountain are continually changing from moment to moment. Do you think your body is exactly like this?"

Mitchell: "I think my body is like a fountain, in the sense that there's flux through it."

Kevin: "Is there any difference?"

Mitchell: "Well, a fountain's made of water."

Kevin: "Do you think there's any more permanence to you than there is to a fountain?"

Mitchell: "No."

David: "Well, we'll have to finish up there. Thanks Mitchell."

Mitchell: "Thank you."

David: "That was an interesting conversation. Kevin and I will be back next week. See you."⁵⁶

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

PHYSICS AND ULTIMATE REALITY

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -
Copyright (c) 1995 Kevin Solway & David Quinn
24th September, 1995

Guest: Paul Davies - Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Adelaide, and author of over twenty books including *The Mind of God* and *God and the New Physics*.

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

Paul Davies had only recently been awarded the Templeton Prize for "progress in religion" when he agreed to appear on the program, and we saw it as a good opportunity to question him on what exactly this progress consisted of. Has he brought mankind closer to the Ultimate Wisdom? Does he himself know what God is? Does he truly believe that physics can tell us something about reality?

*Kevin happened to see Davies on television not too long back, on a program called **The Big Questions**, where he discussed "meaning of life" issues with self-proclaimed atheist, Phillip Adams. Not surprisingly, Kevin was so disgusted by what he saw that he immediately wrote to Davies outlining several objections to his ideas and offering him to come onto our program for a proper discussion about these things. Paul Davies replied and a phone link-up was arranged. (See correspondence below)*

*As with a previous program which we did with physicists (see the **QUANTUM PHYSICS** episode), the following conversation hinges upon the concept of cause and effect, and it illustrates the difference between the **absolute** thinking of Kevin and myself, and the **relative** thinking of scientists. As much as we tried to explain it, Paul Davies was unable to grasp the concept of "cause" in its absolute sense, and it is precisely this failure which will block every attempt of his to achieve the Ultimate Explanation he claims to seek.*

- Correspondence leading up to the program -

From: Kevin Solway

To: Paul Davies

August 21, 1995

Dear Sir,

I am the president of the Atheist Society of Australia and the host of the philosophical radio program "The Hour of Judgment" here in Brisbane. I hope you will take a few short moments to read what I believe to be the shortcomings in your arguments concerning God and Nature.

1. You talk about a number of "possible" universes. But in reality only one universe is possible - the one which is caused to happen. So the canvassing of the idea of other "possible" universes is mistaken. You are assuming that there is some kind of free-will, or at least freedom somewhere in the picture, which is an unfounded assumption.

2. You say that there is no time before the Big Bang - that may be what your maths is telling you - but then you maths is wrong. The fact that we can conceive of a chain of Big Bangs means that time did exist before the Big Bang. Our conceiving of time brings time into existence. Your mathematics blindly ignores the importance of the observer in the creation of all that exists.

3. If you really want a "God" to explain things then why don't you just say that God is *everything*. There can never be a creator greater than everything. All absolute truths are a part of everything. Also, all things create each other. The concept "A" creates the concept "not-A" and vice versa. The number "one" creates the number "two" and vice versa. So there can never be a creative force, or agency, or anything at all, separate from what is created. And what is created creates the creator.

4. You wrongly say that "cause and effect occur in time". Then what about my example above where the

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

concept "A" is the cause of the concept "not-A". This creation is *outside of time*. And it is correct to say that "A" is the cause of "not-A" (and vice versa) because one would not be able to exist without the other.

Would you like to be a guest on my program to discuss these issues? If you cannot make it into the studio then perhaps we could arrange a phone link-up. I look forward to hearing from you.⁵⁷

Regards,
Kevin Solway

From: Paul Davies

To: Kevin Solway

29th August, 1995

Dear Mr. Solway;

Thank you for your letter. From the nature of your questions, I imagine that you have based your opinions about my position on the recent (necessarily superficial) dialogue between myself and Phillip Adams, rather than on the more considered discussion I give in my books, such as *The Mind of God*.

Be that as it may, I shall be happy to talk about these topics on your radio program. May I suggest that you phone me to discuss a suitable date? My telephone number is

Yours sincerely,
Paul Davies.

Kevin: "Hello, I'm Kevin Solway, with me here in the studio is fellow atheist and sage, David Quinn, and welcome again to *The Hour of Judgment* - probably the only radio program in the world for geniuses. Tonight we'll be talking to Professor Paul Davies, author of *The Mind of God*, and winner of the 1.5 million dollar Templeton prize. Now, Paul Davies, are you there down in Adelaide?"

Paul: "Yes, hello."

Kevin: "Right, perhaps you can tell us a little bit about this Templeton prize. What is the prize actually for? And how much money did you actually get for it?"

Paul: "Right, I'm glad to have the opportunity to explain the prize, because in spite of

the fact that it's the world's largest prize for intellectual endeavour, it seems to be not terribly well known. It's been awarded for the last twenty-five years, and its official designation is that it's awarded for progress in religion. Now you may think it's odd that this has been awarded to a scientist, but in fact over the years quite a number of scientists have won it - most notably in my discipline, physics, Carl Friedrich von Weizsacker. Also Charles Birch of Sydney University is another well-known scientist who has won the Templeton prize. Now it's not awarded to people for just doing good works, or for being pious, or anything of that sort. The word "progress", I think, tells it all. Sir John Templeton, who is the benefactor of the prize, recognizes that the world's existing religions leave something to be desired, and feels that people who make a contribution towards advancing theological thought should be awarded something for their endeavours. And I think it's quite clear that scientists who work in areas like the origin of the universe, the nature of time, the nature of consciousness and so on, are tackling problems that for centuries have been part of religion. They're now part of science, and so I think it's quite reasonable that these scientists can be expected to be in the running for this prize."

Kevin: "I'm curious as to what is actually regarded as religion, or theology, these days. A few years ago, someone who you probably know personally, Charles Birch, also won the Templeton prize, and he conceives of God as being a personal God, who actively loves his creation in a human sense. And he regards this as a probability, so he doesn't know this for sure; but he believes it's highly probable. And he believes that you, Paul, are on the path to where he is, and that your concept of God isn't quite as advanced as his. What do you make of this?"

Paul: "Well, I think I can only tell you what my concept of God is. I don't especially want to comment on other people's interpretation. Let me just say that, coming back to the Templeton prize, it's not tied to any particular religion. Some of the people who have collected the prize in the past have been ministers of religion, but some of them have no religion. I myself would not say that I have a religion. I don't belong to any religious or-

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

ganization. I don't go to church. I read the Bible occasionally for literary enjoyment. I'm fascinated by its history, but I'm not religious in any conventional sense. Now, on the question of a personal God versus other types of God, I've recently made a series of television programs with Phillip Adams. You may have seen them - they are being screened on SBS - and we devoted one of these to what I suppose we might call "meaning of life" issues - questions about God and so on. I distinguish quite sharply between two very different conceptions of God which have been around, but the same word seems to have been used for both. On the one hand, there is the personal view of God, which for many people is akin to a cosmic magician - a sort of superbeing who will intervene when times get rough - someone who you can pray to and you might expect to work miracles on your behalf. And this is the traditional God of history. It is, I think, the God you would pick up from the Old Testament of the Bible - a sort of warrior in the sky who backs one side against the other."

Kevin: "Yes, and what's the alternative to that?"

Paul: "Now the second conception is, of course, the much more sophisticated, but somewhat more remote, and for many people less satisfactory, view of God, which I could say is something like the grand architect of the universe - the underpinning of the rationality of the cosmos. Now if you talk to scholarly Christian theologians, in a tradition going back many hundreds of years, this abstract notion of God - as a sort of timeless, rational, ground of being, underpinning the universe - is something that is very current. And in my deliberations with members of the Christian clergy - I can't speak for the other religions - for those of them that have studied theology in any sort of depth, their concept of God is very often rather close to what we might call the physicist's view of God - as rational ground of being. But this is very different, you see, from the miracle working cosmic magician."

Kevin: "I'd see it this way: There are two kinds of God, in the sense that there is a finite conception of God - a conception of God as something finite - and then there's the conception of God as being infinite. So there's either one or the other. The finite God is in

some way separate - to something at least - while the infinite God is in fact everything, absolutely everything. By definition, 'infinite' must be inclusive of everything. So is this the kind of God you're speaking of - an infinite God which includes everything that we can possibly conceive of?"

Paul: "Can I approach it in a slightly different way, because I think you'll find it easier to see what I'm driving at when I use the word 'God'. And I must admit, I don't feel terribly comfortable using this word, but we're stuck with it. The trouble is 'God' has so many different varieties of meaning, that people can seize upon it - they can seize upon a statement that has 'God' in it, and think that it supports or maybe contradicts their own personal beliefs. So that's a very dangerous thing. But let me just try to give you some idea of the way that physicists, including those who would call themselves atheists, see the world. We of course understand that nature is incredibly complicated, but the hope is that beneath this surface complexity there lies some sort of pleasing and harmonious simplicity, some set of laws which are not obvious to us in daily life. When we look around we don't see these laws in front of us - we have to deduce them by intellectual processes and experimentation and so on. But we *can* do that. So there are these hidden mathematical laws which underpin the operation of nature. There is an order in nature, and the job of the scientist is of course to uncover that order and reach an understanding of the world by finding the law-like principles which govern the things that go on around us. That's what science is all about. Now, of course, if you do that, and if you spend a lot of time thinking about these laws which underpin everything, you're inevitably led to ask the question, 'Well, could these laws have been otherwise? Could the world have been different? Might we have had a universe with, say, instead of the familiar inverse square law of gravitation, perhaps an inverse cubed law?' - or something else of that sort. You can play those intellectual games, and I think you're very soon led to the conclusion that the world could have been different - in fact, different in an infinite variety of ways. So then it's quite natural to ask, "Well, is there anything special about the actual order in the real universe, the one that we live in?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

And remarkably enough, there are quite a number of aspects in which it is special. Some of these are a little bit technical, and I don't want to get into too many technical details, but just to give you some rough idea--"

Kevin: "Yes, just give us one example of how this universe is special."

Paul: "We recognize there are four basic forces of nature. There's gravitation, electromagnetism, and two nuclear forces, called weak and strong. These four forces have certain relative strengths. You can take the ratio of the strengths of these forces, and you get four numbers. You can wonder why those numbers happen to be the ones that characterize our universe rather than some others. Imagine playing the role of God: you have at your command an infinite variety of universes with all possible strengths of forces, and you twiddle the knobs a little bit and change something. What you find from a mathematical investigation is that the slightest change in some of these ratios is enough to essentially wreck the universe as we know it. That is, the possibility of complex systems, and in particular living systems, would seem to be gravely compromised by even a slight change, say, in the strength of the nuclear force."

Kevin: "Right, but we've slightly gone away from this concept of God as being infinite."

Paul: "Well, I think the critical point here is that if you're led to believe, or led to deduce, that the world could have been otherwise, and if the world we actually live in seems to be rather special and rather contrived in a number of respects, then you are immediately, of course, led to ask, 'Well, why this world rather than some other? How has the selection been made? What is it that has picked the particular set of laws that operate in this universe, rather than some other set from the class of all possible sets of laws?'"

Kevin: "Well, we know, obviously, that there must be causes for whatever happens. Whether there's chaos or whether there's order, obviously there are causes operating."

Paul: "Yes, but you see, causation as it's normally described, takes place *within* law. Causation is normally just the operation of the law. I'm talking of something deeper. I'm

talking about how have those laws themselves have been selected?"

Kevin: "Well, surely, cause and effect is the most fundamental law of all. Underpinning all laws must be the law of cause and effect."

Paul: "Well, now you say 'must be', but we know that in the realm of quantum physics the connection between cause and effect can become very loose and fuzzy ..."

Kevin: "Well, I think I'll just say that I think I have a different understanding of cause and effect to the one shared by scientists. I think you would conceive of cause and effect as happening in time, but to me cause and effect is more of a logical law - it has more to do with the existence of things. For example, a quantum particle, or anything at all actually, is dependent on, for example, an observer. Without the observer, a thing can't be rightly said to exist."

Paul: "Possibly. That's one interpretation of quantum mechanics, yes."

Kevin: "So this is a different way of talking about cause and effect."

Paul: "I think you're quite right to draw a distinction between, let's say, a temporal sequence, or causal chain, and a logical sequence. And I'm very much talking here about the logical sequence. Because it's my belief, you see, that we do not need to invoke anything like a supernatural being, a God, a Creator, to bring the universe into being within time."

Kevin: "Well, if the Universe itself - and I mean *everything*, the Infinite - is what we give the name of God, well then, of course we can't rightly say that God created the Universe, because the Universe itself is actually God."

Paul: "That's just playing with words. I think to just say, 'God is the Universe', might make some people feel they've just said something profound, but to me it just seems to be relabelling the word 'universe'."

David: "Can I come in here? This is David Quinn. I'm interested in this word 'God'. To me this word 'God', if it's going to mean anything at all, it must be an ultimate explanation of everything. This has to be the one basic characteristic of the word "God" - that it is ultimate, absolute."

Paul: "Yes, I wouldn't disagree with that."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

David: "Right, well, I'm wondering about the role of science in saying anything at all about the Absolute, or the Ultimate. You were referring before to the laws of science and how this Universe seems to be special, and you were asking, 'Why is this?'. I was just wondering how can science, or physics, ever come to tell us *anything at all* about what is absolute?"

Paul: "It's important to realize that science deals with the facts of the world, whereas religion and philosophy deal with the interpretation of those facts. You can have the same set of facts and different people can interpret them differently. So, for example, in connection with the "specialness" of the laws of physics which I've been talking about, some of my colleagues can agree on the amount of specialness, but shrug their shoulders and say, 'So what? It doesn't mean anything terribly significant to me. They could have been much more special than that.' So it's a little bit like arguing whether the bottle of water is half full or half empty. Other people would take that same set of facts and say, 'That's really amazing! It looks contrived, as though some sort of selection has been made.' And if we're just going to restrict ourselves to science ... of course, science can only deal with the law- like behaviour of the actual world - the facts of the world - and it can't tell us, it can't compel us, to adopt any particular interpretation. But it can, I think, provide circumstantial evidence for a certain interpretation that we should be surprised, amazed, pleased, by the specialness of these laws, by the apparently contrived nature of the world, by the peculiarity that the laws are such that they can give rise to thinking, reflecting beings like ourselves. All of these things, in my view, are very odd and very special. They're highly suggestive that the laws which we've got aren't any old rag-bag of laws, but a set that would have to be, if you had a shopping list of laws, very carefully selected - possibly in order that there might be thinking beings like ourselves, for example."

David: "Well, it would appear, maybe to you, that this is the case. I mean, what I'm trying to get at is that every scientific fact, or theorizing about a fact, is inherently uncertain."

Paul: "Of course."

David: "So even the very idea of the specialness of this Universe ... it's an appearance to us. It actually may not be the case."

Paul: "Well, of course. All I can tell you about is the world as we understand it to the best of our ability today - and we can draw whatever conclusions we can from that. But what else can a scientist ever do?"

David: "Well, this is what I'm trying to get at. If we want knowledge of what is *ultimately real* ... I mean, I've been following your career a little bit, and read through *The Mind of God*, for example, and you say that the laws of physics aren't enough to give us this ultimate explanation of everything."

Paul: "Well, you see, the laws of physics, by definition, can't explain why those particular laws."

David: "So science is limited in this manner."

Paul: "Of course, inevitably, science by its very nature cannot provide these ultimate explanations."

David: "So this is where philosophic thought comes into play."

Paul: "Well, I don't think you can avoid it. You see, whether you want to adopt a scientific approach, a religious approach, or an atheistic approach, or whatever, if you want to explain the world in its entirety - which is, of course, a big project - you have to start somewhere. You have to take something as given. You've got to take a ground, a base, a set of assumptions. This could be a set of laws of nature, about which you could just shrug your shoulders and say, 'Well, that just happens to be the set', and you could start at that. Alternatively, it may be some deep philosophical principle. Or it may be the existence of a God, who can in some sense select. It could be something else we haven't thought of. But you have to start somewhere. And whether you're an atheist, a theist, a deist, or a scientist, the bottom level which you start out with you have to accept as an act of faith. I often say that the whole of science is based on an gigantic act of faith - which is that we live in a universe that is not only ordered, but ordered in an intelligible way. That's a huge act of faith, even if you're an atheist."

David: "Okay. But you don't think it's possible to come to this ultimate understanding

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

of reality, so that you have one hundred per cent certain knowledge of reality?"

Paul: "Well, I would be very dubious about anyone who claimed to have one hundred per cent certain knowledge of anything."

David: "Take the Buddha, for example, and those men who are regarded as wise. They claim to have this certain knowledge of reality. They called it 'enlightenment', or something like that. It's a reasoned out enlightenment - I'm not talking about a mystical enlightenment here - it's a full knowledge of reality."

Paul: "Yes, well, my own point of view on these things is that the logical reasoning which we all share when we're discussing the rules of logic, and what we regard as a reasonable argument, and so on - itself can be shown to have its own inherent limitations. That is, ordinary classical logic cannot grasp Ultimate Reality because of some well-known fundamental theorems about its limitations, proved by Kurt Godel and others."

Kevin: "We can be made aware of those limitations through using reason itself. So it's logic itself which illustrates the limitations of logic."

Paul: "Yes."

Kevin: "And once we've seen the limitations of logic, then, if we're brave, we can then go beyond the limitations of logic."

Paul: "Well, we might possibly be able to. At the end of my book *The Mind of God* I discuss this issue under a section on mystical or revelatory insights. And what I say there is that in this search for ultimate explanations of things, science and logic and rational reasoning can lead us only so far. My own feeling is that you'd be best to put your faith in that sort of reasoning, and take it as far as you can go. However, because of the inherent limitations in the nature of logical reasoning you'll inevitably reach a point beyond which you can't go - a point where you'll just have to accept as an act of faith this sort of 'starting point' which I was talking about a moment ago. And then the question is whether by some other mental means, some other kind of intellectual activity, can we leap beyond, can we get an inkling or grasp that ultimate reality?"

Kevin: "Have you had any insights on that particular point?"

Paul: "Personally, no, I never have. But I am perfectly aware that many people claim to

have had these sort of mystical or revelatory experiences - you mentioned the Buddha, and of course there's a long history of Christian Saints and others who claim to have had these deep revelations."

Kevin: "What do you think of the idea - this is a Buddhist teaching now - that all things that we can perceive are actually illusory. For example, we perceive boundaries around things, we perceive things to be limited - and this is part of standard logical reasoning as well - we perceive these things, but when you actually analyse them you discover that the appearance is not real."

Paul: "Well, of course, it's an old idea going back to Plato. So much of the Western tradition, including the scientific tradition, has this Platonic legacy. Plato had a notion of an alternative realm of perfect forms. If we take something like mathematics, which is dear to the heart of every physicist, Plato asserted that mathematics has an abstract existence. Think of a number, like eleven: this number really exists, but it doesn't exist within space and time. It exists within a realm of perfect forms. And the actual manifestation within what we might call the everyday world of our perceptions, Plato saw as being some sort of pale imitation of this world of perfect forms. Scientists have taken this way of looking at the world on board because most physicists who work in fundamental physics have in mind that these laws which I've been talking about are mathematical in nature. The laws, and the mathematics which describe them, have a sort of abstract existence in this realm of perfect forms, and our everyday observations only imperfectly mirror these perfect forms."

Kevin: "Yes, well, let's make this a little bit more personal. Let's take Paul Davies, for example. Now you certainly appear to us in some sense - we can hear you speaking to us, and we can read your books and so on. And in some sense you appear to have had some kind of a beginning, and presumably one day you'll have some kind of an end ..."

Paul: "I imagine so, yes."

Kevin: "But when we actually look at it a bit more closely we discover that when we try to find this beginning of Paul Davies, we can't find it. When we try to find this actual, real end to Paul Davies, we can't really find this either. So the closer and closer we look at

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

what Paul Davies actually is, the more and more infinite he becomes - the more and more his body merges with the whole universe around him. So, in a sense, while Paul Davies appears to us and for practical purposes we speak of you as existing, in actual fact his existence is illusory."

Paul: "Well, I'm not sure about illusory, but perhaps "ill- defined" might be a better expression."

Kevin: "Well, I would say it is impossible to be defined, because we cannot put boundaries on you absolutely anywhere."

Paul: "You're picking, of course, a notoriously slippery concept which is that of personal identity. But we could take something less contentious, like an electron or something--"

Kevin: "Yes, any object at all, actually."

Paul: "Well, it's quite true that on the sub-atomic level we have problems in the identities of objects. Two electrons can be indistinguishable from each other, and can in some sense swap locations."

Kevin: "You see, I think scientists, generally speaking, are very dishonest on this whole issue. You said somewhere yourself in *The Mind of God* that science is uncompromisingly honest, and I think it *is* honest ... within very narrowly defined limits ..."

Paul: "Well, it sets its own rules."

Kevin: "It's consistent within its own rules, to some extent. But actually it's very dishonest - and, I would say, irrational. Everybody thinks of science as being extremely rational, and that this is its problem, whereas I regard science as being incredibly irrational."

Paul: "Can you give me an example?"

Kevin: "Well, scientists refuse to become aware that the things they're looking at are not so clear cut. It doesn't matter whether we're talking about electrons or species, or whatever."

Paul: "I think scientists are very much aware of this. In particular, physicists are extremely aware of the ill-defined nature of reality at the sub-atomic level - the whole quantum physics frolic, you know."

Kevin: "But if they *were* aware of this, then their lives would be entirely different to the way they are. For example, if a person knows that they themselves, *personally*, are infinite, and that their own self has no beginning or end - well then, they would not feel

all the emotions of anxiety and fear, and they would in fact become fully enlightened Buddhas."

Paul: "Well, quite possibly, but I think you're confusing scientists with the practice of science. Individual scientists are flawed human beings like the rest of the population."

Kevin: "So in fact they're not totally honest in that sense."

Paul: "Well, of course, individual scientists can have all sorts of irrational beliefs, and feel passionately about something, and have hunches and intuitions, and can go about practicing science in a sloppy way, and still get it right. But science as a discipline, and the scientific community as a whole, I believe, is practicing something that can be justified. For example, you've been talking about the slipperiness of the concepts of certain things, and let's just take something I'm familiar with, say, the electron or another sub-atomic particle, and the well-known problems of its lack of definition, of its fuzziness, compared to everyday reality. And we can ask: what is it the scientists are trying to do when they experiment with the sub-atomic world of electrons and so on? Well, what we're actually trying to do is to link together really rather concrete things. You can make the measurement of the position or the motion of an electron. You can observe a pointer on a meter, or a click in a geiger counter or something of that sort, which can be very, very precise. And the job of a physicist is to relate all these clicks and pointer readings and so on to each other, through some sort of mathematical and conceptual framework, using, in an informal way, like 'atom' and 'electron' and what have you. And, of course, although we recognize that individual electrons or atoms may well not have a well-defined identity, nevertheless, what we end up with is a whole lot of predictions about concrete measurements. You know, if you go and measure such and such a thing - have a beam of electrons along here, and scatter from a target over there - you'll see twenty percent scattered at some particular angle. You can go and check that. All of that holds up very well."

Kevin: "There's a big difference though between not having a well-defined boundary and not having a boundary at all. You see, I would say that things - and I include every

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

thing here - have no boundaries around them at all, other than what our senses or our reasons create. Because when you actually analyse anything at all, it becomes very obvious, very quickly, that finding any kind of a real boundary at all - a fuzzy one, or a well-defined one - is absolutely impossible."

Paul: "What you suggest is certainly true in one sense. Scientists recognize that there is a subtle quantum connection or linkage even between widely separated parts of the universe. A famous example is where two subatomic particles collide and then move a long way apart, but they are still in some sense entangled."

Kevin: "Yes."

Paul: "And this is recognized, and indeed not only is it recognized, but you can specify very precisely, mathematically, by how much they're entangled and you can do careful experiments to confirm that entanglement. But I think there is another important point here, and you've touched upon it. I've tried to discuss it in some of my books. It is this. Science wouldn't work at all if there wasn't a sense in which we could know something without having to know everything."

Kevin: "Well, in a sense, ordinary everyday life is a kind of science. For example, I'm drinking a cup of coffee in front of me now. When I put the cup to my lips, if the coffee is too hot then I obviously have to put the cup down again. This is a kind of scientific experiment, which everybody does all the time, every day. So, in a sense, everybody is a scientist because we're treating things as they appear, and we're getting the results of little experiments, and we're behaving based on the results of those experiments. So would you agree, in that sense, that everybody is doing science, and it's necessary to actually live?"

Paul: "Yes, well, of course, the practice of science is a refinement of what started out as common sense and systematic observation of the world, and trying to organize our observations into categories and laws and so on - but it's moved a long way from that and taken on a life of its own. I can just come back to this point of nothing having any boundaries or edges, one of the features that I would describe as a remarkably special feature of the

world is precisely that these entanglements, whilst they undoubtedly exist, and in a sense connect everything to everything else, nevertheless don't prevent us from making sense of the world by quasi-isolating certain parts. The example I like to talk about is Galileo and the law of falling bodies. If you drop two bodies, a heavy and a light one - together, and they'll hit the ground together. Of course, if you actually try and do that experiment, you very often don't get that result. It's only by effectively isolating the falling bodies from their environment - for example, dropping them in an evacuated tube, and neglecting other things - that you actually establish this law."

Kevin: "Yes, well, you know you were saying earlier how you regard some things in this universe to be special--"

Paul: "This is one of them!"

Kevin: "Well, I must say that I personally don't find anything in the universe as being 'special', because--"

Paul: "But it's easy to imagine a universe in which you couldn't do that."

Kevin: "What I mean is that no matter what we actually observe, everything happens because it is entangled by cause and effect with everything else in the Universe."

Paul: "Yes."

Kevin: "I remember a little story. A few years ago, I met a fellow who was a bit eccentric and he invited me back to his place for a chat. As we went in the front door, he grabbed the light switch and turned the light on and off several times, and he said, 'It's a wonder!' That's all. 'It's a wonder, isn't it?' And he'd switch it on and off about twenty times - 'It's a wonder.' I mean, this fellow didn't need drugs! But I was telling him that, no, it's not a wonder at all. Once you know the chain of cause and effect, once you know the interrelationships between things, that there's no free-will, that everything happens because it *has* to happen--"

Paul: "Well, yes, of course."

Kevin: "There's no choice in the matter. I'm not full of wonder that the light comes on. I'm not full of wonder that the human species has evolved to the state it has, because I know that there's no choice in the matter. Everything that happens *has* to happen."

Paul: "But that's simply not true!"

Kevin: "Why?"

* [This is often referred to as the Einstein-Rosen-Podolsky (or EPR) correlation]

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Paul: "Well, firstly, because there *is* a choice in the matter. The laws of physics don't have to be what they are. Given those laws of physics, you're quite right, the chain of causation is layed down to you - with the exception, of course, that I've alluded to many times, that quantum physics shows this linkage of cause and effect isn't quite as sharp as most people believe."

Kevin: "But there *are* causes to the laws of physics!"

Paul: "We're coming right back to the issue we started out with. If, by normal causation - and you've been referring to the case of switching on and off the light - what we're talking about is that physical process 'A' gives rise to physical result 'B', and we find that this is invariably the case, and we would then say there is a causal relationship between them. We might find a law of physics that, as it were, legislated that that were so. So in the case of the falling body, we drop the body, it falls towards the ground, and we feel that that's a law- like principle, a law-like encompassing of this cause and effect. But, of course, we can then ask about these laws. Where do the laws come from? Why is the law of gravitation what it is, and not some different type of causal relation, for example, one in which heavy objects fall faster?"

Kevin: "Yes."

Paul: "This is the essential point which I was trying to make. I wouldn't use the word 'causation' when referring to selecting the actual laws from the set of all possible laws, because that does imply something in time, I would use the word 'explanation'. You have just hit the nail on the head by saying, 'We would require an explanation for why those laws are what they are.'"

Kevin: "Right."

Paul: "That's precisely my point. That's why I think that we need - I hesitate to use the word God, because it's so loaded - but something like a deeper level of explanation, a meaning, a purpose ..."

Kevin: "The problem is, if we say we want an explanation for the laws of physics, then this means we have to find something, some other 'thing' which is other than the laws of physics in order to explain them."

Paul: "That's right."

Kevin: "But the thing is, there is nothing 'other'. As long as we're living in a world

where things exist, there is nothing other, or separate, because nothing is ultimately separate from anything else. There is nothing separate from the laws of physics. So we can never, ever find an explanation for the laws of physics, because there's nothing separate from them."

Paul: "Well, I don't know when you say there's nothing separate from them ..."

David: "For example, if the laws of physics were programmed ... Some scientists like to speculate that the Universe could be a computer simulation, or something of that nature."

Paul: "They do. Some of them."

David: "Then all the laws of physics would be programmed into it, and everything that happens is the running of the program."

Paul: "So we could imagine programming it differently and having a different set of laws!"

David: "So you could say there's a definite cause of these laws of physics - the actual programmer."

Paul: "Right, so the question is, what attitude should we take to the rather special way in which, as it were, our universe has been programmed. And one is to shrug your shoulders and say: 'Jolly good job we got programmed, or we wouldn't be here to know it.'"

Kevin: "But hang on, the programmer himself is a part of the laws of physics."

Paul: "Well, I wouldn't say that. He may be part of a meta- universe of which the laws of physics are a component."

David: "Yes, we'll assume the laws of physics are sort of programmed formulae."

Paul: "Yes."

David: "Okay, so immediately, to my mind, the cause of these laws is the programmer, and then we need an explanation for the programmer, and then we go back for ever and ever, Amen."

Paul: "Well, of course, we come back to the point I made earlier - whether you're an atheist, a theist, a scientist, a philosopher, an artist, whatever your explanation of the world, if you want an ultimate explanation you have to start somewhere. And the question is, where do we feel comfortable starting? Do we simply start with the laws of physics as given - the great cosmic program if you like -- or--"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "Well, it doesn't matter, does it. We could start with anything at all."

Paul: "You could even just start with the present state of the world as it is, and not look deeper. But then you would never even do science if you just accept the phenomena of the world as they are, and not bother to inquire 'why?'. The whole scientific enterprise exists because people have *not* been satisfied with just accepting things as given. They've wanted to know *why* things are the way they are. And they found underlying laws. Now we want to know why the *laws* are what they are - and that takes us into this metaphysical realm, where we might start legitimately using words like God."

Kevin: "Why don't we start then with the law of cause and effect rather than the laws of physics, because fundamental to the laws of physics is the law of cause and effect. So if we were seriously interested in understanding Ultimate Reality, surely we should start with that very basic law of cause and effect, and with existence itself, because all of the laws of physics operate on existences."

David: "Yes, without cause and effect, the laws couldn't operate at all, could they?"

Kevin: "Nor without existence."

Paul: "You may wonder why I'm a little bit hesitant about this cause and effect."

Kevin: "Yes."

Paul: "It's just that physicists actually don't recognize cause and effect. The law-like linkages which we spot between physical phenomena are only in a rough and everyday sense reducible to cause and effect. You see, very often, what you're really talking about is just a correlation. You're saying 'A' happens over here, 'B' happens over there, and we find a correlation between them - and in certain circumstances this reduces to the sort of everyday notion of cause and effect, but correlation is a much broader notion. But anyway, let's go with your assumption that mostly when we're talking about explaining things we want to say 'A' explains 'B' and so on. And you're going to point out, of course, as has been known since the dawn of history, that if you have a chain of explanation you're stuck with this chain either going back in an infinite regress, or stopping somewhere. And one of the well-known arguments which is often used against the existence of God is to say that if God is the beginning of this causal

chain, well then, what caused God? This is something we all learn as children. And Christian theologians have struggled for a long time to see whether the notion of an uncaused cause has any sort of philosophical sense."

David: "Well, I think we should actually try and establish, if we can, whether the statement 'everything has a cause' is actually valid. Because if that's the case - if everything has a cause - then, obviously, the causes must go back forever."

Paul: "Well, no, they don't. You see, what we now understand is that, because space and time are part of the physical universe and themselves caught up in this 'web of causation' - if we must use the term - then we recognize that we can't push cause and effect (in the normal sense of a chain of events in time) back forever and ever. Because the universe itself, *including* time, came into existence only a few billion years ago."

Kevin: "Just a minute. This is one scientific theory, isn't it? This is the Big Bang theory."

Paul: "That's right."

Kevin: "But it strikes me as very unlikely that all the matter in the Universe - and I use the word Universe to mean absolutely everything--"

Paul: "I agree, yes."

Kevin: "It seems unlikely to me that there's just one Big Bang. It's more likely that there are an infinite number of Big Bangs."

Paul: "You could imagine an infinite number of parallel universes."

Kevin: "It would be egocentric of us to think that ours is the only one. In which case our Big Bang, this little bang, so to speak, this infinitely small bang, is actually not the beginning of time because--"

Paul: "No, no. There I must contradict you. I agree entirely that we can speculate on the possibilities of an infinity of universes. But each of these universes has its own space and time, with its own temporal beginning."

Kevin: "But why can't we all have a shared time?"

David: "A meta-time."

Paul: "Well, there's no particular reason to postulate this meta-time. Even without it we can still imagine something like a 'meta-universe' in which there are space-times, and we

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

can imagine the collection of all space-times."

David: "Yes, all right, but time is a 'thing'. It's a conceivable thing."

Paul: "Time is a measurable thing - it's part of the physical world. And if we're talking about the origin of the physical world, the Big Bang, we must include the origin of time in that."

David: "But because time is a conceivable thing it must have a cause - even if it's we who are the cause of time."

Paul: "Here I come back to my what you may regard as hair-splitting - the distinction between cause and effect and what the physicist would regard as a law-like correlation. This point is absolutely crucial to understanding how the universe can come to exist from nothing. Quantum physics shows that events can occur in the microscopic realm without having what we would regard as well-defined prior causes. That is, they are genuinely spontaneous events in the sense that they 'just happen'. This is not cosmic anarchy, because the *probability* of various alternatives happening is something which is made mathematically precise. But if you take a typical example - why, say, a radioactive nucleus of uranium decays at some particular moment rather than some other - well, there is no reason I'm afraid. It 'just happens' at that moment, uncaused. It's just a spontaneous event."

David: "Well, actually, this ties-in to what Kevin was saying before about how he regarded scientific enterprise as essentially a dishonest one ..."

Paul: "I don't think there's anything dishonest in what I have said. It is simply a fact about the world that can be tested."

David: "I think there is something dishonest."

Paul: "It's just the way the world happens to be."

David: "Well, for one thing, because quantum mechanics is a scientific theory, it's inherently uncertain. In other words, no one knows whether some new data could come along in the future and overturn the whole quantum theory."

Paul: "Yes, of course. This is the big difference between science and fanaticism, or science and dogmatic religion. All scientific knowledge is tentative. All scientific

knowledge is provisional. What we're trying to do here is to understand things at the deepest level we can, to the best of our ability, given our current knowledge. Now, I'm trying to convey the party line. There's nothing idiosyncratic about what I'm saying. It's just the party line on our current understanding of basic physics and cosmology. Of course, in a hundred years it may all be swept away."

Kevin: "I must say that just a few weeks ago David and I were speaking to a creation scientist, who believes in Noah's ark, and that the whole world was covered in a flood, and I must say that, to my mind, when the physicists say that they're observing events which have no cause ... I think you used the term 'no prior ...' - what was the phrase you used?"

Paul: "'No well-defined prior cause.'"

Kevin: "Yes ... well, that's fair enough. But they seem to go that extra step further and say that there actually is no cause at all!"

David: "It's a big leap, isn't it."

Kevin: "It seems a little bit along the same lines as the creationists."

Paul: "No it's not! It's been known for nearly a hundred years now that there's a sort of randomness, an unpredictability at the level of atoms and molecules - anybody can do these observations - and you see that, in any given case, the laws which govern roulette or dice are obeyed by, for example, radioactive nuclei. This is something that can easily be tested. And then in the 1920's, the question arose as to whether this unpredictability, this randomness, really was a bit like trying to predict the stock market, or the weather, or the throw of a dice. Was it just that we didn't know enough about these atomic systems at a sufficient level of detail to be able to predict them? This is in fact what Einstein believed. He insisted that if only we could probe to a fine enough level of structure, a fine enough level of detail, we would find the causal reasons why the particle decayed at that moment rather than at some other."

Kevin: "The thing is, the whole Universe is unpredictable. I mean, we can do any experiment whatsoever, and we can't predict with one hundred percent certainty what will happen."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Paul: "Hang on, I'm only half way through this little story, and it's an absolutely crucial point."

Kevin: "Continue."

Paul: "So Einstein took the point of view that the unpredictability of the quantum world was essentially like roulette or the stock market - it had its causes in something, but we just didn't know what because we weren't smart enough. The opposing camp, led by Niels Bohr, said: no, this is uncertainty is absolutely inherent in nature; it represents a fundamental limitation to what can, even in principle, be known about the future; there are certain things that simply cannot be predicted. Even with *complete* knowledge of the entire universe you would still find that particular events occurred entirely spontaneously, in an unpredictable manner."

David: "But they're not *entirely* unpredictable, are they. I mean, if these particles were entirely unpredictable then the quantum equations wouldn't be able to work."

Paul: "Yes, but as I said earlier, by 'entirely unpredictable' what I mean is that you can specify the laws of probability. In the same way, I would say that when I toss a coin it is unpredictable whether it comes down heads or tails, but if I did it a million times it would be quite likely that I would get roughly half of each."

Kevin: "Only quite likely, though."

Paul: "That's right. The point is that in the last ten years or so it's been possible to test whether Einstein was right or Bohr was right, and the experiments unequivocally show that it was Bohr who was right."

Kevin: "I think this is wrong because--"

Paul: "Well, I'm afraid the experiments have been done."

Kevin: "The reason is this. There's no way in the world that we, as individuals with finite mind, can know every piece of information in the Universe. But, in a sense, the Universe itself has all the information available to it. So you could say, in a very abstract sense, that the Universe 'knows' everything that is happening."

Paul: "That's what Einstein wanted, you see."

Kevin: "My point is that even though we as human beings cannot know everything, and it's not very practical for a scientist to

want to know everything, from a logical point of view everything still has a cause."

Paul: "Well, that's where I must say that the experimental evidence is against it. You see, Einstein wanted that point of view. He often used the word 'God'. He said that, 'God does not play dice with the Universe.'"

Kevin: Yes, I absolutely think he was right!"

Paul: "The thing is that the experiments, I'm afraid, have really knocked this view on the head."

Kevin: "Can we talk about these experiments a little bit more? Because I've read some of them, and all they illustrate to me is that we cannot explain the results of these experiments. That's all the experiments suggest to me."

Paul: "Well, let me tell you about them, and then you'll be able to change your mind. Most of the experiments used to discriminate between Einstein's and Bohr's view of the world involve two particles that interact and then move a long way apart, and then measurements are performed simultaneously on these separated particles. Now it's possible to prove a very general theorem, making only three assumptions. One is that normal logical rules apply. So if we agree that we want to be bound by ordinary logical reasoning then the theorem follows. And then the two physical assumptions are, one, that there should be no faster than light signalling - that's a consequence of Einstein's theory of relativity, and Einstein for one would be reluctant to give that up--"

Kevin: "Well, I wouldn't be reluctant to give it up."

Paul: "--and the other is that there is some type of reality of the type you were talking about, in which objects have well-defined properties prior to our making measurements - in other words, they really exist in certain states and so on. Normal, old-fashioned, cause and effect if you like. You can show that, subject to those three conditions, there are strict mathematical limits to the degree of correlations that can exist between these separated particles. And you can do the experiment and what you find is that those limits are violated. The limits are called "Bell's Inequalities", after John Bell. And so you have three choices. One is to abandon ordinary logical reasoning - most people

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

wouldn't want to do that. The other is to say that there's some sort of faster than light signalling – 'ghostly action at a distance' is what Einstein called it."

Kevin: "Or that they're somehow connected."

Paul: "Yes."

Kevin: "And so there doesn't need to be any signal between them."

Paul: "Well, they have to transfer information, because what you're seeing with these correlations is basically that the particle on the left knows what the particle on the right is doing."

Kevin: "Well, if we postulated that there was actually no distance between them, and that the distance which we perceived between them was in fact only illusory--"

Paul: "Well, of course, you could do that, but what I'm telling you is that if you make these three assumptions, the experiments violate them. So you can abandon any one of them. Now most scientists would abandon this naive view of reality - of everything having a well-defined cause and effect and so on - adhering to a tradition going back to Bohr. But one or two mavericks want to take your line. They want to say, well, maybe there is some sneaky way in which you can get signals faster than light. The problem that gets you into - if you stick with something roughly like Einstein's theory of relativity - is if you can get signals faster than light, you can send them back in time as well. And then you're stuck with all sorts of causal paradoxes about changing the past and so on, which is even more horrible than the sort of quantum uncertainty that worries you. So these seem to be the choices. Now, it's *possible* that we'll discover that there is some sort of faster than light signalling, and that there are causal loops and things like that, and that some sort of naive, pre-nineteenth century view of reality is closer to the truth. I can't say. All I can do is to tell you what the party line is."

David: "Yes, Paul, but these objections, or these problems brought up by the party line, to my mind pale into insignificance when confronted with the basic fact that these quantum equations *work*. Scientists often say that the quantum theories are probably the most sophisticated and useful ones in all of history, and they have created a lot of tech-

nology. And so they actually do work. They predict the particles--"

Paul: "In a statistical sense."

David: "Right, okay - but *total uncausation*? If these particles were to arise totally uncaused then they would be *totally* unpredictable. This is a logical truth."

Paul: "Yes, that's what I've been saying - subject to that caveat earlier. Like when we toss a coin we would normally say that the particular coin toss was unpredictable but that over a million trials we would predict, quite accurately, that roughly half would be heads and half would be tails. That's how it works in the quantum realm."

David: "Yes, we don't have to even go into that kind of complication. It's just a basic logical truth here, that a totally uncaused event is totally unpredictable ..."

Kevin: "And things are either caused or they're not caused. You can't have something being partially caused."

Paul: "No, well, you see, this is why I don't like this word "cause", and I think most physicists would feel the same. Aristotle showed us that there are at least four different types of causation. If we take something like the radioactive nucleus, and ask: well, why did it decay at that particular moment rather than some other? Well, you might say that what caused it to decay was that it was--"

Kevin: "It was old."

Paul: "No, no, that's the whole point! It's got no memory - that's the whole essence! But you might say that this particular object did what it did because it had a big nucleus - it has a lot of protons and neutrons in it. So in a sense the cause of its decay is that it's big and unstable, that the cause of its decay is that it lives in a universe with a low temperature - I mean, there are all sorts of things which contribute--"

Kevin: "And also the observer as well. Another thing you could say is that the thing decayed because the observer said that it decayed."

Paul: "Well, that's a slippery one, and I think that if we get into that we're going to go down a very obscure path - the entanglement of observer and observed."

David: "All right, but I want to concentrate on this subject of cause and effect. To me, it's fundamental to the understanding of every-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

thing. These four types of causes which you outlined, Paul, are really just sub-categories of the basic notion of 'cause'."

Paul: "Well, they're drawing attention, I think, to the fact that the word 'cause' can cover a multitude of sins. So if you ask, 'Well, what caused a house to be built?' - this is Aristotle's example - well, you might say the bricks had something to do with it. He called that the material cause. But then you might say the blueprint of the house--"

David: "Alright, but what I'm interested in is that when something is caused it is not uncaused."

Paul: "Well, I can't argue with that."

David: "So if everything is caused, if everything is not uncaused, then we can approach an ultimate explanation of everything. This is why it's a very important point. And this is why I think the quantum physicists are misleading us in this area."

Paul: "No. I think that what the quantum physicists have done is shown that your somewhat naive view of cause and effect is an unsatisfactory one for understanding the universe and they have given us a wonderful opportunity now to progress this whole tired debate, which goes right back to Plato and before - this chain of causation. We can now see, that if you get away from a naive notion of cause and effect - if we concentrate instead on *explanation*--"

David: "How is it naive?"

Kevin: "An explanation is a category of cause, though, isn't it?"

Paul: "No, no! I don't think so. Because I would say that we can *explain* how the universe comes into existence on the basis of the laws of quantum physics. Given the laws of quantum physics, the spontaneous coming into being of the universe, or the spontaneous decay of a radioactive nucleus, are things that can be explained."

Kevin: "You see, I would define a cause as something that is necessary for the existence of something else. So if, in fact, the laws of physics are necessary for the existence of a particular event, then we can speak - and don't forget that "cause" is just a word that we use for practical purposes - then we can say that the laws caused a particular something."

Paul: "Yes, I can't quarrel with that, except that I would never myself use the word 'cause' in that context. But if you'd like to

stick with it, well then, okay, make your point."

Kevin: "So then because anything we can conceive of necessarily has a cause, in the sense that it's dependent on something else for its existence - even if that has to be an observer ..."

Paul: "... yes ..."

Kevin: "Then we can say that nothing - nothing that we can conceive of - exists independently as a finite thing, because it's linked by its dependency to something other than itself. You want to call it an explanation or something..."

Paul: "That's true."

Kevin: "It's at least linked to an observer. So in fact anything that we can conceive or perceive as being something finite, as something existing, is definitely an illusion. In fact, the thing is actually infinite, because it's linked to everything else in the Universe. So I think this is a very important thing to understand, and it's based on a knowledge of cause and effect. It's the only way to actually arrive at the infinite - which *is* the explanation of everything."

Paul: "Well, I'm not sure what you mean by 'the infinite'. This is the problem."

Kevin: "Well, the infinite means 'everything'. There is nothing else other than the infinite."

Paul: "Is this the set of all things which exist or something?"

Kevin: "Not a 'set'. Because as you said in your book *The Mind of God* you can't really call it a "set", because it doesn't exist relative to something else."

Paul: "You have to be awfully careful, that's right, because the infinite set of all sets is not actually a set."

Kevin: "That's right. It's just a word. It's like the word "God". I use the word "everything" similar to the word "God". It's not a thing - it's the totality."

Paul: "I'm not quite sure where this is leading us. I guess, to pull it back to the point where we opened at, which is that if we agree that to explain the world, including its coming into being from nothing, we need something like the laws of physics. That's the point I would take. And then, of course, if we want a deeper explanation for the world, rather than accepting it as a brute fact, we should

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

concentrate on those laws, and their particular form and their specialness--"

Kevin: "Well, I'm sorry but I'm going to have to interrupt you there, Paul. We've run out of time. We've come up to sixty minutes, but I reckon we could do another sixty hours on this one."

Paul: "I wouldn't be surprised."

Kevin: "Thanks very much for your time."

Paul: "Well, it's a great pleasure, and I'm very pleased to have been asked on your program."

David: "Thank you."59

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -

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8th October, 1995

Guests:

- Dr. Rodney Bucknell - Senior Lecture in Studies in Religion
- Rev. Dr. Apichart Branjerdporn - Uniting Church Minister

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

David: "Welcome again to the only radio program in the world which deals exclusively with Truth, *The Hour of Judgment*. I'm David Quinn - sage. With me is Kevin Solway - sage. We are sages because we both have a perfect understanding of Reality and a detailed knowledge of the path to Enlightenment. Now some people think, when they meet us and look at our beards and our noble ideas, that we are like ancient philosophers - as if we're some kind of apparition from the pre-Socratic era. But this isn't the case. I mean, we are *here*, living and breathing in Brisbane, 1995, and every day we are spewing out our poisonous wisdom in all directions. And so I say to all of you out there: watch out! Because some of it might stick ... Tonight we're going to look at Christianity and Buddhism together. How does Christianity and Buddhism relate to one another? Are Christians and Buddhists on the same path? Or are they going in opposing directions? Both Christianity and Buddhism claim Truth, and they each have millions of followers, but do they have any relation to Truth at all? We'll be exploring these issues tonight and to help us we have Dr. Rod Bucknell, Senior Lecturer in studies of religion, and whose main area of interest is Buddhism. He's from the University of Queensland. And we also have the Reverend Dr. Apichart-Branjerdporn, Minister of the Albert Street Uniting Church. Welcome, the both of you. Now, Dr. Bucknell, what do you do at the University? What's your main interest?"

Rod: "I'm with the Department of studies in religion, and also with the Department of Asian languages and studies, and my main research area is Buddhism."

David: "Right, so what do you mean by 'Buddhism'? Do you mean coming to the Buddhist wisdom?"

Rod: "Well, of course, what I'm doing at the University is approaching it as an academic, although in my own life I have my own personal contact with Buddhism, my own practice. So there's the two sides to it."

David: "OK. And Dr. Apichart, you were born in Thailand, is that right?"

Apichart: "That's right."

David: "And brought-up as a Buddhist?"

Apichart: "Exactly."

David: "And since then you've converted over to Christianity. Can you tell us a little bit about that?"

Apichart: "Yes. I suppose most of the Thai people, when we grow up, one of the things we have to do in order to do the right thing for our parents is to be a good Buddhist. And furthermore, we are allowed to do more than that, and that is we can go to the Buddhist temple to become a Buddhist monk. You can pick from seven days to a month, three months, or six months. And in this case my parents talked me into becoming a Buddhist monk. So I did it, not gladly, but because they gave me some money to do something like this. So I felt that I have to ask them for how long I have to become a Buddhist monk. So I more or less did my best for seven days."

[Laughs]

David: "Seven days ...?"

Apichart: "At that time I think I must have been about sixteen or seventeen, and after that I had an opportunity to finish my education, in the area of commerce and things like this. And through my University years I came into contact with a missionary. They were trying to help me with my English. And I later on discovered that they are not only teaching me English, but they are trying to help me understand John's Gospel, regarding how you and I can have eternal life in Christ Jesus by putting your trust in him."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "So you had some sort of conversion experience, did you?"

Apichart: "I think we call it a conversion experience, or else the explanation of truth regarding how we can appropriate something, or enlightenment, from somewhere else besides ourself. And because of my own particular need more or less meeting the other need, which is above myself, by beginning to realize that somehow I can depend on the above power there, that can help me to understand that I need all the help I can get."

David: "Do you think Buddhism is too cold and too austere? You know, it's a discipline that depends on the individual himself to strive for this enlightenment. There is no God in Buddhism. So you felt, what, that you were seeking more emotional happiness through your submitting to this Christian God, or what?"

Apichart: I think that in the Buddhism in which I'd been brought up with for many years, I discovered that there's a happiness within ourselves, that we don't depend on material things to make us happy. But at the same time, sometimes you feel that you are all by yourself, and sometimes you feel rather lonely. And then I have the experience or encounter with the Christian message, which is that we have a friend - sometimes we say we have a friend in Jesus. And then we have another Trinity we call The Personhood of Christ in the form of the Holy Spirit that can give us that intimate relationship within our own heart. And I felt that's great - it's just like falling in love. So we have that personal relationship, and then we have that other Trinity there, we call God our Heavenly parent, if you like. So in other words, I was beginning to feel that I actually belong to someone called God."

Kevin: "Can I ask, have you reached any certainty as to whether this God exists? Or do you think it's a matter of probability that God exists?"

Apichart: "I suppose I believe that, through my studies and through my discoveries for twenty-five years or more in the area of the Bible and Christ, I have felt more and more that there is more reason to believe in God than not to believe in Him."

Kevin: "So you're fairly certain, but you're not absolutely certain ... ?"

Apichart: "Well, I would say it would be about ninety-nine percent at least."

Kevin: "Right."

Apichart: [Laughs]

Kevin: "And what about yourself, Rod? You're a Buddhist. As far as I know, Buddhism doesn't believe in a God. Certainly, the Buddha never taught of such a thing. Do you believe in the existence of the Christian God?"

Rod: "Well, frankly - no. I've never been persuaded successfully by anyone that there was good reason to do so. And, in fact, I can remember from the age of about ten or so, I decided, 'Well, no, it doesn't make sense to me'. And so religion, generally, didn't make sense to me for a long time. I felt it was just talking about alleged realities that I had no evidence for. So I was very skeptical and cynical about religion generally. And then I encountered, in Thailand, Buddhism, particularly Buddhist meditation practice, which was what really interested me in the beginning."

Kevin: "That's a coincidence, that it was in Thailand!"

Rod: "It's a very interesting coincidence. So here we have a Westerner who became a Buddhist and a Thai who became a Christian. But it was precisely because Buddhism did not have this notion of a Supreme Being at the centre of the entire teaching that it was so attractive. Because the idea of self- help, of inner development and so on, was perfectly acceptable to me with my rather scientific turn of mind. But at the same time I had come to realize that there was an aspect of life which material things and science and so on didn't deal with and didn't cover - which was one's inner life. And Buddhism, particularly Buddhist meditation practice, was concerned with this - it made good sense, especially when I tried it out."

Kevin: "Now, of the many different kinds of Buddhism - there are probably more different kinds of Buddhism than there are kinds of Christianity - what kind of Buddhism are you most attracted to? There is Tibetan Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism ..."

Rod: "Well, basically, Theravada is the one that I would particularly identify with, partly because this was the one which I first encountered. That's the style one encounters

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

in Thailand, and so that was how I was introduced to Buddhism.”

Kevin: “So do you believe in reincarnation?”

Rod: “Um ... no. And I was about to say before that there are some aspects of Buddhist teaching which, like God, I have no evidence for, and no inclination to accept because I have no evidence for it. I have no evidence against it either. These are things which I feel we just, at this stage, at least for myself, have no way of verifying it either way. So I just leave that to one side. It doesn't seem to me to be an essential element of it, anyway.”

David: “I think we should look at Jesus and the Buddha. I mean, do you, Apichart, think that Jesus and the Buddha were on the same path?”

Apichart: “I think both of them are very good, and they both have compassion, and at the same time they are both clean and Godly-living.”

David: “Right, but we had the Buddha who was teaching a very atheistic doctrine, and Jesus who was teaching his ‘God’ doctrine ...”

Kevin: “I think Jesus actually said ‘He who is not with me is against me.’ So the Buddha would seem to be teaching something which is against what Jesus was teaching ...”

David: “And so was an agent of the Devil!”

Kevin: “It would seem so - if we believe literally what Jesus was supposed to have said.”

David: “How do you deal with that one, Apichart?”

Apichart: “Well, I suppose in light of that one has to compare with different data in the Scripture, as far as that fitting together there. So in one portion of the Scripture one cannot make a judgment that it is ‘this’ or ‘that’, because doing that is an injustice to that particular teaching.”

David: “But still there's the central thing that the Buddha was preaching an atheistic doctrine and Jesus was preaching about ‘God’ - they're totally opposed.”

Apichart: “Yes.”

David: “Obviously, one of them must be wrong at the very least.”

Apichart: “That's right. But I think what I can do here is ... the Scriptures, they're saying that Jesus comes in order to fulfil the law, or the establishment. So in a sense we're not here trying to get rid of ‘this’ and ‘that’ - it's a very inclusive type of thing. I suppose what I received from Buddhism is helping me to live that wholesome life, if you like. But at the same time coming to realize that there is something, as far as the principle of the belief in contrast to the practices, the principle is there - as far as there is Almighty God, the Universal God. So therefore there is someone up above there. Even Buddha himself said that ‘After me there will be someone greater than me.’ And for me, to figure out that greater one ... I figure that it maybe similar to John the Baptist, trying to say that, ‘After me, Jesus will come along, and he is greater than me’.”

David: “And so Jesus was a greater Buddhist exponent than the Buddha!”

Kevin: “Well, David, that must mean we're greater than Jesus!”

David: “Yes, that's right. It all comes down to what is meant by the word ‘God’. Now I would argue that what Jesus meant by the word ‘God’ and what Buddha meant by the word ‘Reality’ are exactly the same. Both these words mean the *Infinite*, the Infinite Reality of which we're a part. And when you look at their lives ... say, take the life of Jesus. I see at least two Jesus's in the New Testament. I see the wise Jesus, which makes up about ten percent of the Gospels - this is when he's imploring us to give up our attachments, to give up everything we hold dear for the sake of Truth. And there's about ninety percent of the New Testament which I regard as a load of codswallop - the miracles and the basic herd morality, the common morality. So I think that I, as an aspiring sage, have to discriminate. We all have to make these discriminations. We have to decide what is the wise part of the New Testament - or indeed what is the wise part of anything - and reject the rest. So how does that fit-in with what you're on about, Apichart? Do you make discriminations in this way? Do you think everything that was written in the New Testament is the word of God and there perfect, or are there parts which are no good?”

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Apichart: "I suppose there's a progressive belief there. Sometimes we have to believe something that we can see, just like a step-by-step type of thing. There are many things in the Scripture talking about a Jesus who is a liberator. That is to say, he comes not only to save those who are lost, but also people who are poor. He has the compassion to help them. But at the same time there are many parts in the Scriptures talking about miracles, whereby when we have that intimate relationship with Him - just like any other relationship - when the two of them get together so well anything can happen. So there is that kind of ultimate relationship where there is a miracle - things can happen. I'm still learning as far as getting in touch with all those wonderful portions of God's Word whereby one can experience the phenomena of atmosphere whereby we can feel the supernatural intervention in our life. But those passages ... I might not be able to experience it yet, but it doesn't mean that they're no good."

David: "I find it interesting that the Buddha actually counselled against miracles, whereas the central tenet of Christianity is that of Jesus being raised from the dead after three days. Now to me this is proof that Jesus was not a wise man."

Kevin: "Or, at least, his followers weren't wise."

David: "Yes, but assume that Jesus is capable of rising from the dead."

Kevin: "Oh yes ... I didn't think of that possibility."

David: "Just assume that these miracles are possible - so I'm not arguing here against miracles *per se* - just that if they are possible a wise man would never perform them. This is because it would encourage delusions in the minds of his followers - the delusion of personal preservation, preservation of the ego and so on. This is why the Buddha counselled against miracles."

Kevin: "Let's look at this question of ego, because I think this is a fundamental difference between Buddhism and Christianity ... well, maybe not so different when you actually look at the Buddhism and Christianity of today. Rod, what do you think about emotional attachments from your understanding of Buddhism? From my readings of the Buddhist Scriptures, the Buddha counselled against emotional attachment. Someone who

is wise doesn't get emotionally attached to things; he doesn't feel emotional love towards women or any object in the world - they're detached. It doesn't mean they're not understanding and caring about reality, but they're just not emotionally attached. What's your understanding of this?"

Rod: "Well, the Buddha certainly teaches that attachment is the cause of suffering. If we're attached to something, then although there may appear to be pleasure and joy in the relationship with that object, there will also be sorrow in it, and it is taught that, ultimately, the suffering and the sorrow outweighs the joys and so on. Now this may sound as if we'd be better off being totally cold and uninvolved in everything, but the reality is, of course, we're not like that. We *do* have attachments, and it's simply unrealistic to say, 'Oh well, I won't have any attachments', because I do have attachments. We all do. And what the Buddha advises us to do is to simply observe what goes on. To observe the whole process when we find ourselves becoming attached to something, whatever it may be. To observe the whole process and note that in fact it does generate suffering. And seeing this is all that's needed to convince us of the dangers in attachment."

Kevin: "And when you see the dangers of attachment, then you become unattached? Is that what you're saying?"

Rod: "Yes. Of course, one can sort of intellectually say, 'Oh yes, attachment causes suffering and therefore I won't be attached'. But it's only through actually seeing how it works and how it actually does generate suffering--"

Kevin: "Yes, the attachment originally comes from a wrong understanding of reality."

Rod: "Exactly. It's simply when we fail to see things as they really are that we become attached. And when we do see things as they really are, particularly when we see how attachment operates and what it does to us, then it just falls away. We don't have to say, 'I must not be attached.' All we have to do is see how it all works, see the process operating, and that's effective."

Kevin: "This seems to me to be a major difference between Christianity and Buddhism. You never, *ever* hear Christian ministers telling their followers that attachments

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

are dangerous. Love itself, human love, is a very, very strong attachment. The love between a husband and wife is a very strong attachment and is the cause of an awful lot of pain. When the wife dies, or when the husband dies, or when one of them is unfaithful, there is pain. Yet you never, today, hear Christians talking about non-attachment. This is another very large difference between Christianity and Buddhism."

David: "Even though Jesus himself spoke against attachments! He counselled giving up everything you hold dear for the sake of Truth. And he said somewhere along the line: 'Whoever does not hate his mother and father, brothers and sisters, wife, his children, even himself, cannot be my disciple.' He said elsewhere: 'Whatever is most valued amongst men is detestable in God's sight.' So here is a total agreement with the Buddha. *It is the root of spirituality*, and yet it's what Buddhists and Christians, everywhere I meet, totally ignore - the actual spiritual teaching."

Apichart: "I suppose one has to come to an understanding of the meaning of attachment or love. We Christians talk about four different types of love. That is to say, if we talk in terms of the physical love we talk about the *eros*. And then we talk about friendship, where we're really fair-dinkum about each other, where there's comradeship. Then we have another type of love concerning family love which is just within our own system, our own blood and life, where no matter whether we like or dislike we're still going to dip-in and help for any friend. But the last one, *Agape* - just like you've been saying, Kevin - that *Agape* just happens to be the same relationship that is used concerning the husband and wife relationship. So that love there is not detachment. That love there, we are not going to possess it. That love means a ministry or service."

Kevin: "OK, so with true selfless love, there would never be any pain involved, because one is not investing anything in the love. It's infinite. It's an infinite form of love, or understanding ..."

Apichart: "It's a giving love, rather than getting. So when we express that love we ask ourselves to whose benefit it is. And if it's for my concern then somehow that kind of love is a possessiveness, rather than a service or ministry."

Kevin: "So, in the case of a wife dying and the husband feeling grief, this is a sign that his love was not true *Agape* love."

Apichart: "That's right. I suppose in one way we think that we release whoever it was who died to the Lord, and hopefully that somehow it's for their own good. But the sadness is those who are left behind. In a sense, we're missing them so much. But if we have that *Agape* love there ..."

Kevin: "You wouldn't miss them at all!"

Apichart: "It's not a detachment. Somehow, it's a release."

Kevin: "Hmm, *sounds* interesting ..."

David: "Yes, I don't understand what you're going on about there, Apichart. I don't understand this term 'giving love'. What does it mean? To me, if you're going to really love someone else then you have to provide them with the greatest gift in the Universe. And the greatest gift in the Universe is wisdom. Wisdom is the understanding of Reality. That to me is the greatest gift. So the act of giving love, the greatest act of love, is actually being a good teacher."

Kevin: "I think the Buddha once said: 'The greatest miracle is to know the Truth and to make it known to others.' So true love is actually opening the minds of other people to the nature of Reality, to wisdom."

Apichart: "That exactly."

Kevin: "And you never find this between husband and wife."

Apichart: "We yet have to learn the real meaning of *Agape* love, that God-given love. When we love someone I suppose we try to help them as much as we can to come to the realization of what love is all about. So we are not trying to control them. We allow them to have their own freedom. But we are not going to take the second best because that love there is about wanting them to have the very best, not the second best."

David: "Concerning this *Agape* love, this unconditional love ... why would anyone get married? Because marriage is precisely *possession*. It is actually sanctified by law that you're possessing each other, that you're having exclusive rights to one another, that you're getting mutual pleasure from one another. It's incredibly selfish. So how does this spiritual love come into play there? Like you were saying before, Kevin: "You're either for me or against me." You can't dilute.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

You're either totally selfless or you're totally selfish. So how can there be spiritual love within a marriage?"

Apichart: "To be a Christian love there, we have to come to an understanding of that highest, unconditional love. So when we have that love there, we're not going to possess anyone. What we're trying to do is be of service. We are not going to go halfway but are going to love them one hundred percent, no matter whether we are going to be loved in return or not. And hopefully we are going to win that love from our spouse. So when we have that love there, certainly it's not going to take possession of anything at all. Rather, we are going to give."

David: "It's interesting that Jesus was single all his life and he actually preached leaving your marriage for the sake of the spiritual life. So I find it interesting that Christians are living the complete opposite of this, the opposite of their own leader. It's extremely humorous to me. What do you think about that, Rod?"

Rod: "Well, I mean, people are human ..."

Apichart: [Laughs]

Rod: "And it's fine for us to talk about pure love in the *Agape* style, but most of us are a mixture of all sorts of things."

David: "Well, no. If you're going to call yourself a Christian ... a Christian means a *follower of Christ*. Okay, we may be weak, but what I'm talking about is something different. What Christians do is they not only marry, but they get God to bless this marriage! So they're actually creating this great evil - the complete opposite of what Jesus was teaching."

Kevin: "And people who don't get married they think there's something wrong with them."

David: "That's right. This is actually turning the whole of Jesus's teachings upside down. So we're not really talking about weakness here - we're talking about something completely different."

Rod: "I think that in any of the religious traditions there's a smaller number of practitioners who are really dedicated to the path of practice that they've adopted. And the vast majority of followers take the teachings as a general guide, but they're not one hundred percent committed. So that's why not every Christian becomes a monk and goes and lives

in a monastery. And not every Buddhist does that either."

David: "How do you mean a 'general guide'? Jesus says do not marry - be as who I am, and do not marry - and Christians take it as a general guide and get married!"

Apichart: "Well, I think the truth of the record of the Scripture is that Jesus never mentioned that you should never get married. In fact, marriage is a sacred - I hate to use the word - institution. It's a sacred practice. In the Scripture, St. Paul said that if you have that burning desire, better not stay single - better to marry."

David: "'Better to marry than burn'."

Apichart: "So in a sense the permission is still there. And at the same time the encouragement is still there that married life is sanctified by God."

David: "Well, actually, it was Paul who said that, and not Jesus, wasn't it? Now I think that Paul had no understanding of Jesus in the slightest degree. And in fact the Christian Church evolved out of Paul's ideas, not Jesus's ideas. I can honestly say, that except for probably Kierkegaard, I haven't come upon any Christian, *ever*, whether living or in history, who actually understands Jesus, their own leader."

Apichart: "Would you say, David, that Paul has maybe been influenced by Jesus?"

David: "No. Well, only in a very indirect sense. He had no conception of what Jesus was and what he stood for. He was just a very ordinary man, a common fundamentalist that you would meet on the street - a Jehovah's witness or something. He just fostered people's delusions. He encouraged people's delusions, like marriage."

Kevin: "He made compromises where they should never have been made. Paul said, 'Preferably you should remain single. How I wish you could remain single like me. But if the burning is too great, if the suffering is too great, then you should marry, because it's better to marry than to burn.' In other words, it's better to marry than commit suicide or go completely mad! It probably is better to get married than to go out and shoot people with machine-guns. But that's different from living a Christian life. It's probably better to take drugs ... it's probably better to take heroin than to go out into the street and shoot people

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

with a machine-gun - and marriage is just like this."

Apichart: "But I think the consequence of getting married, you have a family. And the outcome of that is that you have the full circle, the unit of the family. So one can have that appreciation from the love that we can share with the family. So I don't think it's just the burning desire, but so we can have that coming together as a family."

Kevin: "Well, I think we'll just have a little bit of music. And when we come back we'll talk about the importance of *understanding* - the understanding that is necessary to know what love is."

[MUSIC BREAK]

Kevin: "Well, after that Church music by Johann Sebastian Bach, we're going to talk about *Agape* love, or selfless love. Now before the music I was saying that we should start to talk about the topic of understanding. Now selfless love presupposes that we understand what selflessness is. If we understand what selflessness is, it means we understand what the self is. So now we're starting to get philosophical. What is the self? What is selflessness? Now from the Buddhist point of view, the understanding of Ultimate Reality is regarded as the most important thing. The philosophical understanding and the consciousness of Ultimate Reality is the essence of the whole of Buddhism. You don't see it practiced very often in the world today, but nonetheless that is what is taught. And this understanding of what the self is, and what the self isn't, is a basis upon which one can live one's life. And it's basically about realizing that you are not separate to anything else. When you try to find where you are, or exactly what this person is, it becomes impossible to find. Now this is an understanding that Christians do not have, this philosophical understanding of what the self is, and what is consciousness and so on. You'll never, ever hear about it being taught in Churches. So I would say that it's *impossible* for any Christian, at any time, whether it be by chance or not, to practice selflessness, because a Christian has no understanding, through no fault of their own, of what selflessness is. What do you think about this idea of understanding, Apichart?"

Apichart: "Well, I suppose, thinking through the whole idea of the *ego*, the self,

the whole idea of 'me', there's one particular Scripture that stands out vividly to me. It's the teaching of St. Paul in Galatians Chapter 2, verse 22 ... no, verse 20, rather. It says: 'It is no longer that I live, but Christ liveth in me.' So in a sense he reduced himself into nothing. But I think you are right there. It is there in the Scripture, but maybe, as a Christian minister, we may need to say more in this area, concerning how we have to be daily dying to sin and self. And that's a big issue there."

David: "I think Kevin was saying that understanding what the self is, and therefore understanding what selflessness is, is the *prerequisite* before we can actually practice selflessness, and that Christianity doesn't even encourage this process of understanding. It encourages people, rather, to submit to a book and a set of beliefs, and it encourages people to become more emotional, to seek emotional refuges. Nowhere in Christianity are people encouraged towards the actual understanding of the self--"

Kevin: "Or the understanding of God."

David: "Same thing, at bottom."

Kevin: "They're not encouraged to the logical understanding of what God is, of what Reality is. There's no investigation, even amongst theologians - it's not really there."

David: "So how can a Christian be selfless, given this?"

Apichart: "I suppose in one way I take it that we may need to do more. Or in the past we haven't done good enough a job so far as convincing people to come to this analysis about who we are. So as a result we know that somehow, as a human being, we have to come to that realization that we have to die to self, so that another person - that is, God or the Spirit - can live in us. So as a result we don't have to have this struggle; we don't have to have this conflict by ourselves. We can have a helper, which is God the Holy Spirit. So the whole idea of self there, of this poor me, that somehow has to come to this submission, that I can't live by myself, that if I try to live by myself I'll fall flat on my face."

Kevin: "Well, actually, I can't even see how the Christian God - the God that modern Christians believe in - I don't see how this God, God Himself, could be selfless. You see, there's two possibilities for God: either

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

God is a finite thing, like a cup, or God is infinite, which means that there is no limit to Him - in other words, everything that we can see and conceive of is God. Some people would call this pantheism - the whole of Nature, and all of existence, is God. So God can only be one of those two, either finite or infinite. Now I've never met a Christian who believes that God is everything. I've met pantheists who do; I've met Buddhists who do; but I've never met a Christian who does. So that means that all Christians believe that God is finite, that God is not everything. God, in other words, has a self - he is *something*."

David: "He is 'Other' - that is how Christians describe it."

Kevin: "Nonetheless, He also has a self - He has an 'other' self. And if He has a self, then He's not selfless. The only thing that can be selfless is that which has no self, which is the totality, the Infinite."

Apichart: "I think you are right there, Kevin. What I can say there is to put back into the relationship. I think getting to know someone, and the limit of getting to know someone, is that relationship. And if that person cannot deliver the kind of things that I expect from them, that would be finite of that person. But I think the whole idea that we're trying to have that relationship is not just only to know that person, but if I really want to know what love is all about, I have to explore in such a way, and say, "Well, that person may only give me that much, so it is finite, but I am getting to want to know more about that person. I want to know love". So love is infinite in the sense that it can go on and on and on. So the same thing with God. I can only know God when I allow Him to enter into my particular area of life."

Kevin: "So you actually believe God is a finite thing? You don't believe God is everything?"

Apichart: "I believe God is both. God can come in when we allow Him. And if we put a stop there, He can go no further. But if we allow Him to enter deeper, wider, or more meaningful, I think the sky is the limit."

David: "Well, if God is infinite then He cannot enter anywhere. He cannot leave or enter. It's just not possible. So we never, ever leave God, and God never ever leaves us, *ever*, in the slightest degree ..."

Kevin: "If God is infinite."

David: "That's right - which He is. So it's just false thinking that God can enter anywhere. It's egotistical. It's selfish that we even conceive that God can enter into us."

Apichart: "God is a very, very gracious God. He is not going to be on a high-horse in such a way as to break into our particular domain. If we are not inviting Him, He is not going to come in. But if we allow Him, we can have a vital, intimate relationship, just like any relationship. So I think the ball is in our court. And if we want to play that game we have to pass the ball."

Kevin: "You obviously believe in free-will."

Apichart: "Exactly."

Kevin: "What about yourself, Rod? What are your thoughts on the subject of free-will and determinism? You've obviously thought about karma, or cause and effect ..."

Rod: "Yes, that's a tricky one. We certainly appear to have free-will. But sometimes when we look a little more closely we can discover that we're not acting as freely as we imagined. If we examine all the elements of our decision making, very often we can find that we're just acting blindly, as if we are just some kind of machine. We find that what we're being driven by is our habits, our emotions, and all sorts of things like that. There's no actual deciding whether to do this or to do that - we just do it. We may say, 'I'm doing this because I wish to do it--'"

Kevin: "But there's a reason why you wish to do it."

Rod: "Very often, when we really look into it, we can see that there's one of these quite mechanical sort of processes going on in our mind which is causing us to wish to do that. Now I think that free choice only really comes when we have full, clear vision into what the total situation is, when we're able to see all the factors that are there and when there is a full understanding and insight into the situation."

Kevin: "And we'll only have that if we're *caused* to have it. We only have choices if we're caused to have choices. So there's actually nothing that doesn't have a cause, and in that sense nothing is truly free."

David: "Well, if we understand that God is infinite, then how can there be any type of will at all? Because it's God that does everything."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "Yes, everything that we choose to do is God's will. When I talk about God now, I'm not talking about the common Christian God. I'm speaking about God as meaning *everything*, the totality, or in Buddhist terms, *emptiness*, the nature of Reality, the thing that is all there is - there is nothing other than what I'm calling God now. Everything that happens is the action of God. If I choose to live a totally ignorant life, I'm doing it because I'm caused to do it, and those causes come from the Universe, from God. So it's selfish of a person to think that he can do something which is not God's will."

David: "Or even that he has a will, that he actually exists! If God is infinite, how can anybody or anything exist?"

Kevin: "This is the question I think no Christians actually consider - whether God is finite or infinite."

Rod: "Well, I think those sorts of questions one could probably go on speculating and theorizing about infinitely, and I wonder whether we'd ever come up with an answer. Of course, theologians--"

Kevin: "Well, we have! David and I have the answer."

Rod: "Yes, of course."

David: "This is interesting. Did the Buddha come up with an answer, Rod?"

Rod: "Well, the Buddha says the way to find the answer is simply to observe what we can observe. And if we start off with the premise that God exists, or that God does not exist, then what we arrive at is going to be right or wrong depending on whether we started off with the right premise. But the only way to be sure of not getting trapped in speculation and so on is simply through observing what is there before us. And what is there before us is the content of our consciousness and all the stuff that's going through our mind, all the experiences we have in life and so on. And that is the raw material that we have to work with."

David: "I'm not so sure that this is what the Buddha taught. I think it's more that the modern commentators teach this."

Kevin: "That's right. The only way you can 'observe' is if there is a self which is capable of observing. And there has to be a consciousness to be observed. But if both the consciousness and the self are not really there, then it's not possible to observe any-

thing. So I think it's only the modern, false Buddhist teachers who say that we should sit and observe."

Rod: "But how do we know that the self is not really there?"

Kevin: "Through analysis."

Rod: "Analysis?"

Kevin: "Well, this is interesting. You know, in Christianity, faith in God is supposed to be very important. Now my understanding of this is, again, completely different to modern Christianity. Reason tells me that Reality is Infinite, and that I am part of It. This is what I call God. But it's difficult to believe in it, because we see ourselves here, and we feel emotions occasionally, and we have habits - so it's difficult to believe that I am Infinite, and that I don't have free-will, and that everything that happens in the Universe is part of me, and that I am doing everything that happens in the Universe - it's difficult to believe. So it requires faith. That's not to mean that it's irrational. It means that you require faith in what you know, what you *know* to be true, after having reasoned about it. So when I reason about my own self, I know that it can't be found anywhere. And the reason it can't be found is because there are no boundaries which delineate myself from anything else. That's the reason I don't have a self. Similarly with consciousness. When I try to find where consciousness begins and ends, it disappears, the boundaries disappear."

Rod: "You said before: 'If there's no self, how can there be any observing?' But you just said then that you can reason things out. So if there's no self, how can there be reasoning? Just as it's hard to believe in an Infinite God, it's also hard to believe there could be no self. It seems as if there *must* be - I mean, obviously, I'm here. And so rather than trying to persuade myself that there's no self, or trying to reason it through and come to the conclusion that there's no self, I would rather examine what is in there. I would rather examine what it is I call myself, and just see, "Can I find it?" And on the basis of that I would be prepared to accept that there is a self or there isn't a self."

David: "Well, it's funny, just as I was criticizing the Christians before, now I have to criticize the Buddhists."

Rod: "Go ahead!"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "Because they're doing the opposite of what the Buddha taught. Now the Buddha, the original Buddha, talked about cause and effect--"

Rod: "Yes."

David: "--and no self, and the giving up of attachments. Attachments, you see, are based on the self. This was the kernel of his teachings - cause and effect. So it's not speculation. Understanding that everything has a cause leads to the conclusion that there is no self. It's iron-clad reasoning here."

Kevin: "Of course, there is always an appearance of self. Maybe this is what you were suggesting, Rod. We certainly have the appearance of self, but just as a mirage ... when you try to find this thing which appears to be real you find that it's not real."

Rod: "That's right, and if you *find* that it's not there, that's fine. But just because the Buddha says there's no self, I'm not going to just accept it - just because it's in the books."

David: "Fair enough, but--"

Rod: "One of the Buddha's fundamental principles which we should be following is: 'Don't believe it just because I said so.'"

David: "Okay, but at the basis of all Buddhism is the reasoning about finite and infinite. Now everything that exists is finite - it has a beginning and an end in some sense. So if we understand what 'finite' is, then we understand *everything*. The whole of Buddhist analysis centres on this idea of 'finite': What is it? Does it really exist?"

Kevin: "There is a saying: 'There is no infinite apart from finite things.' So if we want to understand what is infinite, which is God, we have to understand finite things, which are ordinary things in the world - which means understanding cause and effect. In Buddhism, they have something called 'The Graduated Path to Enlightenment' - in Tibetan Buddhism they do, anyway - and the first step on this path, which nobody ever practices, is the understanding of cause and effect. With an understanding of cause and effect, it's understood that there's no real free-will. At the same time as understanding there's no real free-will, there is the understanding that there's no self. At the same time as understanding that there's no self, there is the understanding that one's own self is the entirety of the Universe, which is omnipotent and

omniscient. So all of this comes through a reasoning process, through an understanding. And also, with an understanding that there is no self, there's an understanding that other people are a part, literally a part, of one's own self - this infinite self that has no boundaries. So when Jesus says that you should love your neighbour *as* yourself, it doesn't mean that you should love your neighbour as much as you love yourself. It means that your neighbour is literally your own self. So if you don't love your neighbour *as* your own self, literally, then there's no understanding of God. There's no faith. Understanding has to come before faith."

Apichart: "I suppose that comes from the word of understanding. I suppose that before we can love other people we've got to know how to love ourselves. That is to say that if we don't know how to love ourself I think any relationship will suffer. As a human being we have to come to an understanding that we are human, and there is limitation, and that limitation is finite. And if we're trying to come to understanding of God, who is infinite, we will try so hard to reach there, but somehow we are not going to think the way that God is thinking, because our thought is not God's thought. Our way is not His way. So there's a limitation there, which we call finite. Whereas God is infinite, is infinite in such a way that He is transcendent beyond and above what we can think or imagine."

David: "Well, what I find both in Christianity and Buddhism is that they are identical. You know how they talk about interfaith dialogue ... well, both religions are identical in that they both encourage a total mindlessness. They don't encourage reason. So these basic reasonings that the Buddha taught - you don't see it in Buddhism. They recite the Scriptures and they study the Scriptures but they don't actually think and reason it out. So these two religions are identical in that they promote mindlessness. It's very few people who actually love to reason and to understand Truth."

Kevin: "Well, that's *The Hour of Judgment* and we're going to have to close it up there. Sorry we can't even give you a last word tonight - we've run out of time. Thank you."⁶⁰

SEXUAL FANTASY

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Guests:

- Patricia Peterson - member of staff at the Department of Philosophy at University of Queensland, and expert on sexual fantasy.
- Gil Burgh - member of staff at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Queensland, and President of the Queensland Philosophy for Children Association.
- Suzanne Hindmarsh - Female thinker.

Host: Kevin Solway

Kevin: "Hello, I'm Kevin Solway, and welcome once again to *The Hour of Judgment* - probably the only radio program in the world for thinking people. David Quinn is taking a back-seat this evening after having selflessly given up his chair in the studio to make room for our, not two, but *three* guests tonight. I'm here rather than David because I've particularly devoted my life to educating people about the vast differences between men and women, and about the superiority of men - or I should say the superiority of masculine psychology. And tonight we'll be talking specifically about the psychological differences between men and women, and what those differences mean in terms of the relative value of each sex. Now the only way to understand a person's psychology is to understand what they value, and I've discovered that a most fruitful way of discovering what a person values is to look at the nature of their fantasies, and especially their sexual fantasies. Certainly, our sexual fantasies, since they pertain to mating and reproduction, are deeply programmed into us. Alongside me this evening is Suzanne Hindmarsh, who has been a guest on this program once before. Our regular listeners would remember that Sue describes herself as the world's only female feminist. She believes there are a number of male feminists, like David and myself, but she's the only female feminist that she knows of. Also in the studio tonight we have Patricia Peterson. She's from the philos-

ophy department at the University of Queensland and is an expert in sexual fantasy. Opposite her, we have Gil Burgh who is a tutor at the philosophy department and is the President of the Queensland Philosophy for Children Association, and who also takes an interest in sexual fantasies. Perhaps I could begin with you, Patricia. Could you tell us exactly what is your interest in sexual fantasy, and why are you interested in this area?"

Patricia: "Well, I guess I'm interested in three things, really. I'm interested in sexual fantasies generally; I'm interested in masturbation; and I'm also interested in the role of the clitoris. So I guess if I can talk about my interest in sexual fantasies first: I guess I agree with you, that if we have a look at the types of fantasies that women engage in - women in particular - we can see, or at least have displayed to us, or we can somehow be exposed to, what's really going on in women's minds."

Kevin: "Right, and can you tell us a bit of what *is* going on in women's minds?"

Patricia: "Well, there are a few things. In your introductory statement, you said something about reproduction. I think somewhere in the program we'll deal with that issue a bit later on. I tend to think that there isn't so much difference between men and women. Or it appears to me as though there's not as much difference between men and women as I think you believe there is."

Kevin: "Well, perhaps we should talk about rape fantasies."

Patricia: "Okay. Great."

Kevin: "Surely, there are differences between men and women regarding rape fantasies, and the ideas that go on during these fantasies?"

Patricia: "In terms of rape fantasies, it's interesting that in the seventies women were reporting that they were engaging in rape fantasies, but what those fantasies tended to involve was a woman perhaps fantasizing about a faceless figure entering the woman's home, overpowering her either in a physical

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

and/or mental sense, and her being submissive, passive, waiting to be penetrated, being penetrated, and then her more or less saying, or at least experiencing the idea or the concept, that, 'Okay, I'm still a nice girl. I've been overpowered. I'm a bad girl deep down. But hey, hang on, I couldn't do anything to resist this.' Whereas nowadays I think women are certainly still engaging in rape fantasies, but what they'll be more inclined to do is turn that type of scenario into a situation where the woman overpowers the man. Sure, she's just about to be penetrated, but then maybe the guy is thrown on a bed, tied up, handcuffed, whatever, and she jumps on top of him, and she doesn't position herself in a submissive or subservient role."

Kevin: "Has there been very much research done on this to show that perhaps women are becoming a bit more dominant in their ideas and in their fantasies?"

Patricia: "Well, actually, Nancy Friday is an interesting woman. She has written two books: one earlier book called *My Secret Garden* lists the fantasies of women fairly much from the seventies, who engaged in sexual fantasies, particularly rape fantasies and the like, or at least fantasies that involved submission, humiliation and so on. But she wrote a more recent book, which came out in about 1994, called *Women on Top*, and in this book we can see that the fantasies have certainly changed. Now I remember reading in the introduction of her book that she went to Yale University and all over the place to try to read about male and female sexual fantasies, but really there was nothing in the literature."

Kevin: "Yes."

Patricia: "So it's very difficult to find stuff."

Kevin: "Yes, it's difficult to speak about rape fantasies because there's not enough data. I think that's fair to say. So let's move on to what we do know a bit more about, and that's women's infatuation with romance. From my reading, a lot of women's sexual fantasies are about romance - not necessarily the physical act of sex, but everything that precedes it and everything that is around it. Have you taken much interest in this area as well?"

Patricia: "Actually, I have. I don't think it's the case that women aren't fantasizing

about romantic scenarios. I think women are still doing this. But I think women feel as though they have more choice now."

Kevin: "Well, women are certainly doing it judging by the sales of *Mills and Boon* books, and all of the women's magazines, and so on."

Patricia: "Sure, even though that is the case ... as I say, I don't think women aren't engaging in romantic fantasies, or getting a lot of sexual excitement, or getting a lot of sexual desire that involves these romantic situations ... but I think what they're doing is they're recognizing that there are more options available to them. They're not only engaging in romantic scenarios, or romantic fantasies that involve these types of scenarios, but they're fantasizing about finding some man, taking off his shirt, his pants, slipping their fingers, perhaps, into his jocks and seducing him. I mean, they're having a lot of control. They're being active rather than merely passive."

Kevin: "Have you noticed this yourself, Gil? Not only in your personal life, but do you see in the literature that women are becoming more active and taking control?"

Gil: "I think it depends on how we start defining 'active', 'passive', 'in control', 'overpowering'. I have problems using these dichotomies. As I think Pat was saying, I think if you read a lot of *Mills and Boon* novels, and these days *Mills and Boon* is slightly changed, with the X-rated stuff - the more highly explicit *Mills and Boon* stuff, anyway - it doesn't mean I read it, but I've read a lot about it - but in those scenarios you have there, we tend to call them romance, but if you look at *Mills and Boon* in terms of female pornography and then look at male pornography--"

Kevin: "Well, I actually call 'romance' female pornography. It is actually sex. It's about the excitement that arises between the sexes, therefore it's part of sex."

Gil: "Well, if you look at it in that way I'd still want to argue that what we tend to call romance ... you can still look at it Pat's way and say that they're still fantasizing about some things, and it usually is with *Mills and Boon* that the man overpowers the woman - that's usually what happens in the end ... The only difference is that the woman in this sense sees herself as the object of male de-

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

sire, whereas if you look at male pornography it's the male who uses the woman as the object of his desire."

Kevin: "Well, surely, this is a generalization - a *true* generalization. We can say there's a major difference between the sexes. Women tend to view themselves as the object of desire - the goal is to get married, whereas male sexual fantasies don't involve weddings - they involve control and involve numbers of women. Female fantasies involve just several people whom they're well acquainted with, whom they're good friends with, and whom they love. So these are big differences between men and women - if they are true. What do you think about this, Patricia?"

Patricia: "Well, even though I think women may indeed fantasize about their wedding day and being seduced, perhaps, in white gowns, by their husband to be, or whatever, I don't think that's as common nowadays - from looking at Nancy Friday's stuff, in particular. I mean, what women tend to fantasize about are scenarios which just aren't romantic in tone. The bulk of their fantasies involve them often being quite powerful - I mean, perhaps, having lesbian relationships, even having sex with dogs, cats - all sorts of things. What I mean is that they're moving away from the bridal gown and the white picket fence, I feel."

Kevin: "Yes, but I think that, if we can go by the sort of literature women read, and what's in women's magazines, romance definitely plays a very large part in the female psyche. So I would include these romantic ideas and thoughts under the category of sexual fantasy. I'm not thinking purely about physical sex here. So if we include all of those romantic ideas as sexual fantasies then we can start to draw very large distinctions, because men don't have many of these romantic fantasies - not to the same degree."

Patricia: "Okay, so there's a distinction to be drawn between what women fantasize about, and what that perhaps says about their psychology, and what is naturally their psychology. I'd like to suggest that even though women may fantasize about romantic scenarios, that certainly doesn't mean that they're *naturally* romantic or that they're *naturally* inclined to dream about hooking-up to a man and becoming depend-

ent on him for nurturing comfort, protection and so on."

Kevin: "Okay, Sue, what do you think about this idea of a natural tendency to be romantic? Do you think it's right to say women are naturally romantic, or what?"

Sue: "Yes, definitely. They're very romantic in the sense that every wakeful moment and every sleeping moment of their entire lives is spent in this very mode of mind. There's no change. We were talking before about the literature women read - everything from *The Woman's Weekly* to *The Cosmopolitan* to all the magazines on the shelves, you know, *Bride*, *Mother* - there's heaps and heaps. Within each of those magazines, from the front cover to the back cover, every page is full of just this: getting your man, how you're going to get him, what you're going to wear, and what colour shade of lipstick--"

Kevin: "Maybe things are different in the cloisters of the University, but out there in the suburbs this is the case, isn't it?"

Patricia: "I tend to agree with you that a lot of women still go for the bridal magazines, that they'll still pursue this romantic kind of ideal. But there's a huge leap, I think, from saying that women enjoy reading these glossy magazines, where women are represented as being dependent on men and appearing as though they want to be protected and nurtured, to saying this is what women naturally are. I mean, the media has a lot to answer for. The media is very powerful."

Sue: "So Pat, can I ask you: is this only an appearance, then? You're saying that it's all an appearance, that women really don't want to get married, and that women aren't buying these magazines to help themselves towards this goal of theirs. So we've all been mistaken, and all those magazines on the shelves are--"

Kevin: "Have all the women been duped into it?"

Patricia: "Yes. Yes, in a certain sense, yes."

Sue: "By whom?"

Patricia: "By the media. Women are socialized to believe they need a man to survive. They haven't separated themselves from mother. They haven't learned to masturbate themselves. They haven't learned that they're responsible for their own sexuality. They haven't learned that they can cope on their

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

own. You see, women can pay their own rent, go to work from nine to five, be incredibly responsible, but when it comes to sexuality they just miss the boat. They don't realize that they can put their hand down their own pants and do what fairly much a man can do."

Kevin: "So what do you think, Gil? Do you think women have been totally conditioned by society and the media? Or how much of it do you think is genetic, for example, or hormonal?"

Gil: "I'd like to extend even beyond women, in the sense that gender itself is constructed - and even further, sexuality is constructed."

Kevin: "Constructed by what?"

Gil: "Constructed by our language, which is embedded in our culture. Language is culture and vice versa."

Kevin: "Well, if we didn't have any language at all then none of these things would exist. That's fairly obvious. But we do have language, so things exist, and so we have the sexes."

Gil: "But we have to try to differentiate between the society we're in at this present moment, and what you're maybe talking about, which is presuming there's this state of Nature beyond language, beyond this constructed culture. What would you have? Well, of course, there'd be obvious differences, because we have different bodies. I mean, I have a penis and Pat has a vagina. We're looking at two different bodies which get the information and look at the information differently and turns out viewing sexuality differently, but--"

Kevin: "And we have different values as well, don't we?"

Gil: "Yes, this is all true, but I think there's a difference between arguing that, just because this may be the case, obviously one would be nurturing and the other one wouldn't. I mean, depending on what sort of culture we're in, and what sort of values we're brought up with, what sort of society we have, what sort of language is in place, the sexes will be different. And in this case I would say a lot of it is that women don't have the same opportunities as men have in terms of being able to express their sexuality. Women are always being seen in terms through the male, rather than as individuals."

Kevin: "Let's look at things a little bit from the biological perspective. I'm not sure what relevance this is going to have to the discussion but we might be able to make it fit in. Now, the human child is different to a lot of other animals on our planet in that it takes a long time to develop - to be able to learn language, and to be able to stand on its own two feet and live by itself. So it needs nurturing and it needs a lot of work done, presumably by more than one parent. So it's in the interests of the mother to find somebody or something which is going to support her in the rearing of the child through this long period of time. Whereas the man doesn't so much have this concern. The more he can spread his seed around the place, the more he passes on his genes. So romance is a means of woman capturing a man, tricking him, or by any means possible getting him into that wedding. On the Internet, the most popular discussion group for women is 'Weddings'! It seems to me that the whole of a woman's life centres around the wedding. With all the soapies, the ratings shoot up whenever they have a wedding on one of their episodes. Men aren't interested in weddings."

Gil: "But we've constructed romance. I mean, where's the romance in the other cultures? Let's look at aboriginal culture and ask where is their view of romance? Their view of romance will be different from what our view of romance is. It's just that we look at male sexuality and the way it is--"

Kevin: "Well, aboriginals may have no need of romance, but certainly--"

Gil: "I wasn't saying they didn't have romance, I'm saying why aren't we saying that they do in fact have romance? Just because they don't read *Mills and Boon* and wear white veils..."

Kevin: "Perhaps."

Gil: "So what I'm saying is: in our culture, we're just saying that what women are doing is romantic and men aren't. I surely think *I'm* romantic!"

Kevin: "Yes, romance for men is a lot different. Take the Marquis de Sade, for example - seeing as we are talking about sexual fantasy. I would describe him as a very romantic man, in the sense that he had an ideal and he pursued it relentlessly and with great consistency. So this is a form of male romance. It's very different to the female form

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

of romance, which always is about capturing a man into a relationship to support her. What do you think about this issue, from the biological point of view? You would *expect* there to be large differences in our psychology and our fantasies, wouldn't you?"

Patricia: "I wouldn't mind getting clear on what you're saying. Are you suggesting that biologically, or naturally, or whatever you'd like to call it, men tend to be inclined to not want to be hooked, but women want to hook."

Kevin: "Yes. I get that impression that is the case."

Patricia: "Okay. Well, actually, thirty or forty years ago it was in women's best interests to hook-up with a man, because in terms of employment opportunities and so on there wasn't terribly much on offer for women. So to find a man who could provide for her, to help her raise her children, was a fairly sensible option. Nowadays, that's changing. I mean, we still have a fair way to go in terms of equal opportunity and so on, but times have changed, and I think women now are not as inclined to feel that that's the only option they have. A lot more women now are choosing not to get married. They're choosing perhaps to be single parents. They'd prefer to be with a good man rather than any man."

Kevin: "What do you think, Sue? Do you think women are changing gradually?"

Sue: "No, not at all. In the sense that Patricia was saying there about women becoming single parents, and being prepared to wait for that special man to come along instead of just grabbing anyone off the queue, you can see that the government - especially in this country - has taken the place of the husband, and provides and protects and supports women, and is seemingly doing a mighty fine job for the amount of single parents there are around. Now does this mean that she has changed? That is, has she really become more independent? Has she changed the basis of her psychology, which is, to my mind, *submission*. I say no, obviously. If you have a look at her, she's still not striving for anything. She goes on her merry way every day, wishing and dreaming the same dreams that she's dreamed for eternity, and she definitely isn't evolving into an independent, single-minded, self-reliant creature."

Kevin: "I think we have to remember that, genetically, women are the ones who are supposed to have babies. So there *is* something in women other than culture. We can't pretend to ourselves now. It's been found that even when women in their twenties are very interested in their career, once they reach their thirties and they still haven't had a family, their interest in their career declines very rapidly and they become a lot more interested in having a family. And this is one reason why a lot of employers are not that interested in employing women - because they know that the odds are that this is going to happen. So all these points tend to indicate that there's something much deeper than culture which is creating these different values and different ideas and different fantasies."

Gil: "I think we should still try to make a distinction here. I mean, if you want to talk about it in terms of biology and evolution, the female of the species are the ones who have babies. Well, if we don't deny that, and I guess none of us here want to deny that, we can still look at how many ways women can have babies - depending on the support networks that we have for women. Sue just said we have governments who support women in this case. Then it automatically follows that, if you go on supporting them in this way, then obviously they're going to remain wanting to be supported. But if you look at different programs - and I don't want to get into that at the moment - but maybe different ways that women can support each other, well, then their values will be different. Okay, men and women might value differently - I agree with that - and that may be a biological thing that we can never get past - I don't know. But even if we assume this, just because they value differently, there's a difference between that and *how* they value differently. So in our society, the way they value differently manifests in a certain way; in another culture, it might be another way. But to work out which is the fundamental part that is biological - well, I wouldn't like to say that it's passivity. Just because they have a baby doesn't necessarily mean they're passive."

Kevin: "Well, it has been found that testosterone makes people more aggressive. It gives people more of a tendency to want to control - which is closely linked with aggres-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

siveness. If men are caused to want to be aggressive, to want to control, then it's in women's interests at least to play a role of being passive."

Gil: "Why?"

Kevin: "Because in that way they can manipulate the man. If they can't compete with him on pure aggression; if they can't defeat him at his own game, they can at least defeat him by means of looking attractive."

Gil: "You're looking at it in a very Hobbesean way here - in terms the competition between individuals. If it's true that men want to dominate - and I guess a lot of feminists have said it, and I guess most people say that men want to dominate Nature and therefore they want to dominate women - so they want to dominate anything around them--"

Kevin: "This is undeniable, I think - in every culture."

Gil: "Okay, but we've got to look at how domination can also appear. We've got the word 'domination', we've got the word 'aggression', but we can display aggression in different ways. And when it comes to the role of men and women, you're assuming that because the males are dominant the females have to figure some way to trap the males or--"

Kevin: "Get her own way."

Gil: "But, surely, there's complementary parts of it? The male and female can complement each other. It doesn't have to be a struggle between them where one entraps the other."

Kevin: "Well, I think men and women *do* complement each other in the sense that men are dominant and women are submissive. Wouldn't you say, Sue?"

Sue: "Yes, that's the dynamic there. If women aren't submissive then men can't get their pleasure, their sense of themselves through woman. So what's the good of woman if she's not submissive, and vice versa? This is the dynamic between men and women."

Patricia: "But that almost sounds as though testosterone is a given. Men are aggressive because they have all this testosterone running about in their bodies, therefore women should be passive! You can almost say that an implication of this is that women, if they're exposed to a threatening situation

with a man, like rape, should just lie back and think of England."

Kevin: "We're not saying that women *should* be passive but that women--"

Patricia: "But you're sort of implying that women should somehow curtail their behaviour, their attitudes, their psychology, the way they just 'be' in the world, to accommodate men! I mean, I'm wondering why one would think that?"

Kevin: "Well, I think women should be given testosterone. But we're going to have a bit of music now and we'll come back and continue on this very subject."

[MUSIC BREAK, "What I Am" by Edie Brickell]

Kevin: "Okay, well, that's enough from Edie Brickell. We were talking about the importance of testosterone and the importance of aggression versus whatever it is that women do. We're getting onto the subject of values now. Now Gil, do you have any ideas about what you think is of most value? Do you think that the male lifestyle is more valuable? I mean, given that all the great philosophers, the great artists, the great writers, the great leaders, and the great inventors throughout history have all been men, and presumably this has been because of testosterone, aggression, and the desire to conquer, do you think this lifestyle is of greater value than what women do?"

Gil: "Well, we've first got to look at why we value and what we value. If you're looking at the type of society we're living in, and the way society has been constructed, and ask, 'What do you think would better this world?', and if you're looking at it *these* days, I think it would be very much the case that dominance is not something we'd want to value. In fact, I don't think that what you've been calling passivity should be valued either. So when we look at values, we should look at the way the world is. And if we look at the way the world is - women through their lived bodies, men through their lived bodies - and if males are dominant and females aren't, well, we should look at it as *difference*, and say that, once we have this difference, can we value this difference? And then, how do we approach ethics through difference rather than valuing one over the other and saying, 'Well, let's equalize that either way'?"

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "But what about you, personally? What do you value above all else?"

Gil: "... um ... apart from *myself* ... there's two things I value. And one of those things is that if people could trust a little bit more. And the other one is--"

Kevin: "Does trusting involve intelligence or understanding or knowledge? Or is it a blind faith?"

Gil: "Well, that's a bit of a hairy one, but I look at trust as an intuitive thing. When we have trust, it goes upon how we interact with other people."

Kevin: "What about the followers of David Koresh, who trusted David Koresh? Obviously, you don't think this kind of trust is wise?"

Gil: "As it turns out, it wasn't. When you look at trust, you've got to look at it in terms of the community where the trust is coming from. The community you're talking about was an isolated community."

Kevin: "Well, there's a lot of communities which are very similar!"

Gil: "I agree with that, but that's the nature of our society. But we've got to look at our society differently in terms of how society is set up."

Kevin: "Okay, so we've got to change society so that it's trustworthy, and once we've created a trustworthy society and we *know* that it's trustworthy--"

Gil: "Yes, change the structure of society so that it allows more trust."

Kevin: "So, we only trust things which we *know* to be trustworthy?"

Gil: "Yes, I guess we do."

Kevin: "So it doesn't take an awful lot of trust there, does it? ... because here we're totally confident that we're doing the right thing."

Gil: "That was just one value I was talking about. The other one is that we should be seeking solutions in terms of cooperation rather than in terms of competitiveness."

Kevin: "Okay, but surely all these solutions involve some kind of knowledge, a knowledge of truth, some sort of escape from ignorance. Now this is what, I think, involves aggression. That is, the desire to be free from ignorance, the desire to be free from complete unconsciousness. I argue that most people alive today are really unconscious, even though we speak of people as being conscious, because they're just drifting along,

victims of the forces operating on them. They don't take any conscious control of their lives as individuals. And this desire to consciously take control as an individual is a masculine thing. And generally speaking, the more testosterone a person has, probably, the more they have this desire to individually conquer and individually control. A lot of this controlling takes very bad forms, I admit. But if a man wants to conquer *everything*, then one of the things he wants to conquer is his own ignorance, because he feels like a darned fool if he's wrong. Consistency is very important to men. And the only way you can be truly consistent is if you have a complete knowledge of Truth. So if a person has this aggressive urge, then there's a chance that he will become a truly great philosopher - a Socrates, a Weininger, a Nietzsche, a Buddha. Whereas if you don't have this desire to achieve and to conquer - and I'm thinking of women and womanish men - there'll be no knowledge and no wisdom. So I'm saying that wisdom is the thing we should value, and only when we have a wise society can we have things like trust - because I wouldn't trust anybody who wasn't wise."

Gil: "But I guess there your definition of 'truth' and 'wisdom' is very much from a masculine paradigm. I'm sure Pat will have a lot to say about that."

Kevin: "What do you think, Patricia? Do you think there's a difference between truth for men and truth for women?"

Patricia: "Well, perhaps. Because, as Gil pointed out earlier, we have different bodies, and because we speak through our bodies I think the sort of information we have access to may be in a certain sense a bit different - but I don't want to make too much of that. But there was one thing which you said - a very solid point you made, I feel, though I disagree with it, but it was a very strong point - you were saying something like: because of this testosterone running around in men's bodies, they have this aggressive urge or desire to seek the truth or to seek knowledge. I mean, to me, a lot of testosterone running about in men's bodies leads to a lot of car smashes; it leads to a lot of loss of control; it leads to fighting in nightclubs. I mean, it leads to *destruction*. It doesn't lead to control; it leads to the lack of it."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "Well, there's certainly a price to pay isn't there."

Patricia: "A *big* price to pay, I feel. I think we should control the aggression itself. I don't think that it's just men who are aggressive, of course. It's women as well. So in that sense if you want to say it's a desire to control which somehow acts as a catalyst for a person pursuing truth, knowledge, beauty, or whatever it is, fine, but I don't think it's testosterone."

Kevin: "Well, testosterone makes a person dissatisfied. For example, research has shown that once a man reaches the age of about fifty or sixty his testosterone falls off and he becomes physically more feminine - more feminine in his mind and more feminine in his thoughts - because he simply doesn't have that testosterone coursing through his veins. Men at that age report that they become a lot happier and a lot more satisfied with life--"

Sue: "Contented."

Kevin: "More contented. Whereas throughout their earlier life they always felt as though they were lacking something - they didn't know who they were. I mean, if you ask a girl of the age of eighteen how they feel about themselves, they *know* who they are. They're fully developed and complete in themselves. A man of twenty-nine has no idea who he is or where he's going; and it's testosterone which does it. And because a man is not content, probably because of his hormones ... I'm not saying that he's always going to search for Truth - it happens very, very rarely - but there's always a small chance that he might fluke upon getting pleasure from Truth, and *then* we have the first step towards our great philosophers and our great wise men - which, surely, are the most valuable things in the Universe."

Gil: "I disagree with that because it depends on the notion of truth. If you take *me*, for instance, and say that, because of my natural 'manness', I follow or pursue this certain path ... now my upbringing suggests already that depending on how I get taught to use my testosterone ... In other words, in a different culture I might be a different person. If you want to put that aside, there's still the fact that I'm looking for a different thing. It's definitely got something to do with my lived body, my sexual experience, me, who I am, and therefore I might be searching for truth,

but Patricia would be searching for a truth as well through her body. But our society has valued my opinion over Pat's."

Kevin: "Let's talk about these different truths. Now I know women value their feelings an awful lot. Probably the *only* thing women value are feelings. In women's sexual fantasies, *feelings* play a very large role. That's why when women are asked how they would feel having sexual relations with friends, they say they would enjoy it. But if it's with complete strangers, they don't enjoy it, because there's no real feeling there. But with men, it doesn't matter that the woman he's fantasizing about is someone he's never met before, because I would argue that the enjoyment is a more abstract thing. It's not just feeling."

Sue: "It's a separate part of his life, isn't it."

Kevin: "It's to do with domination, it's to do with control - it's more abstract. So if Truth is closely linked with feelings, well then, yes, women have the Truth. But if Truth is linked with reason and logic, well then, the Truth is in the domain of men."

Gil: "Well, it would depend on what truth was. I mean, I would want to reject any absolute notion of truth. I would look more towards the American pragmatist tradition if I was going to look at truth. Truth comes from community. It might be a dynamic thing, and what's true today isn't true tomorrow."

Kevin: "Okay, but is this true?"

Gil: "Well, under that definition it would have to be!"

[*General laughter*]

Gil: "It depends on how you look at it. Because if you want to look at some kind of correspondence theory of truth - you assume that truth corresponds to some facts - who is going to define these facts? Well, I guess the people in power are going to define these particular facts as true. So we're going to look at a masculine society where truth is valued through rationality, through reason, and it has been for two and a half thousand years. Women can't get an inroad into it because they're constantly having to put up with the way males have defined this truth, and haven't been able to speak from their bodies in order to make it valuable."

Kevin: "Well, no, there *are* absolute truths, and these truths are based on definitions. For example, if we define a certain colour to be

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

black, and another colour to be white, then we can say it's an absolute truth that black and white are different colours."

Gil: "Yes, okay."

Kevin: "So these truths, based on definitions, are really the only absolute truths there can be, because anything based on perceptions is fallible. So it's only these abstract truths which are absolutely true."

Gil: "Alright, yes."

Kevin: "So, straight off, it's a fallacy that there are no absolute truths."

Gil: "But they're not the truths that would tell me anything useful about the world."

Kevin: "They do tell you about Reality - not so much about perceptions, but about *Reality*. This abstract thinking is very difficult for women, and it's partly because of their brain structure. Now there has been quite a lot of work done on the different brain structures of men and women, and through brain scans and so on they have discovered that men are able to localize thoughts within their minds and are able to focus on particular ideas a lot better than women, whose ideas are a lot more scattered and who are getting information from many sources. So women have a wider spectrum of perceptions, but men are able to focus on things a lot better, and as a result of this men are able to penetrate ideas more successfully, without distractions."

Gil: "That's a nice masculine term 'penetrating' - but anyway, go on."

Kevin: "You thought of it, not me."

Patricia: "Are these comparisons done on adult brains?"

Kevin: "Yes."

Patricia: "I'm wondering if there've been studies done on brains of infants? Because one could be a bit sceptical of those studies, for all sorts of reasons."

Sue: "I don't think there would be a great deal of difference between the brains of infants. I don't think there's a real change occurring until adolescence. My theory is this: the beginning of puberty is a few years earlier for girls than it is for boys, and it happens at about the same time that kids begin to think better than they ever did before. They're able to reason better; their ideas get sharper; they're better able to concentrate on their ideals. Now, with girls having puberty earlier, the hormones are rushing, their lives get

filled with menstruation and beauty and fashion, and everything gets twirled-up into their lives, and they're pushed along immediately into the life of womanhood. They're a woman the moment they start to bleed. But with boys, they don't really go into puberty until a couple of years later, so they've actually had a couple of years to settle-in to thinking about things. So they've got a head start on women already."

Kevin: "Not only that, but it's been found that if you simply give a person a shot of testosterone they become better at abstract reasoning."

Gil: "Can I just add to that bit? Carol Giligan has done some studies on this notion of abstract reasoning. She describes men as looking at things through terms of justice and women as looking at things through terms as caring. And she uses a really nice illustration. I don't know if anyone's seen those ambiguous drawings, where you've got either a fish and a rabbit, or the vase and the two faces. She says that at only one time can you see the vase - if you're looking directly at the white - or you can look at the faces. And she says that if you take looking at the faces as being what men do, and looking at the vase as what women are doing ... okay, one might see one of them better than the other. So men may be able to see the black faces better than women, but who says that this type of reasoning and this type of judgment has to be better?"

Kevin: "Most of our listeners will probably know the illustration you're talking about - the vase and the two faces. So if we say women are looking at the vase, and men are seeing the two faces - this is just like I was saying before: women value feeling, men value permanence and control. So which of these two is better? And I'm putting it to our listeners, and to you in the studio, that if we want Truth, the only thing which is truly permanent, then what men are seeing is *infinitely* more valuable than what women are seeing! This is because women are only experiencing feelings - the same as what cows experience. All animals have intuitions and feelings."

Gil: "Because we have valued reason in the past, we find better answers in reason now; but if we explore emotions we might find that eventually it will give us better answers."

Kevin: "Might'!"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Gil: "But reason hasn't made it better anyway, so I mean--"

Kevin: "Well, there's not many very rational men in the world today. But those men who are extremely rational - and again I'm thinking of people like the Buddha and Nietzsche and so on - have achieved an awful lot! What do you think, Sue?"

Sue: "Yes, this is it. We're talking here about this difference, and it strikes me as very important that women speak of wanting 'equality', but they want equality with *difference*. And I tell you that you've got to have a standard. A standard has to be set. I'm all for women becoming liberated. I think I'm the only female, as was said earlier, who wants this. But what this means is that women have to become more masculine; they have to become men. Why, you may ask? Why should women change this pleasurable life they have, and have to struggle and strive and work hard and become self-reliant just for, let's say, the survival of the planet would be a good example; why should women change from their nice, happy, one-dimensional life, into this multi-structured, complex, striving human being? Well, if we don't have a whole--"

Kevin: "Consciousness."

Sue: "Yes, consciousness, then you're not considering the consequences of your actions. If you're not conscious, you don't consider the consequences, and I tell you that women *aren't* conscious. They do not consider the consequences of any of their actions. Whereas men *are* conscious creatures, and therefore they can consider the consequences; then they can make changes. They can actually reason out what's necessary and what's to be done. They are self-reliant in the sense that they don't depend on everybody else to keep them buoyant - they'll go and do things by themselves. They'll have an ideal, they'll have a goal, *they'll change the world*, and they'll give their whole life over to it. And, as I say, *men* do this. Women can't do this. It's not in them to do it. I always say this: there's only one woman, and she's just got many faces. Because, as I've said before, she's not conscious, she's one dimensional, and her whole life is just this one-dimensional sort of 'same thing' ..."

Kevin: "Camille Paglia says that if women were running the world, we'd still be living in

caves. What do you think of this idea? Do you think it's good to live in caves, or what?"

Patricia: "Actually, Camille Paglia ... she's an interesting case."

Kevin: "She is that!"

Patricia: "There have been a lot of things said, but one major thing which was pointed out a bit earlier was that women are feeling oriented, supposedly, and men are rational - they're more drawn to reason, to logic, and so on. I think what you were really saying about women is not so much that they're drawn to feelings, but that they're - at least what I'd hope to think you were saying - was more that they're negotiators or communicators. In the playground, little girls will become upset, not so much if their little friends aren't following the rules, but because they're not liked, or they're thrown out of the sand-pit. They need to be liked. They're told that they have to be liked, because otherwise they're not okay. So they tend to be communicators. They grow up communicating. On the other hand, boys, in the playground, learn to wipe their tears away, and keep a stiff upper lip, but they will also become aggressive if their other male friends don't follow the rules. Now if you consider the political arena ... I mean, if we're trying to work out how we ought to live, not so much what the truth is; whether women are feeling oriented, and men are reason and logic oriented, not so much where the truth really sits - but how we ought to *live*. I mean, can you imagine what our political situation would be like, our global political situation, perhaps, if the parliamentary representation of women changed? I mean, if more women entered politics? I doubt very much that there'd be the screaming matches, the pathetic jokes about Paul Keating's bald patch, and so on. Women would take their communication skills into that context and I think a lot of wonderful things could come of that. I don't see that women should become men, whatever that means, and according to your definition it means becoming logical. I don't see not being able to communicate, and being aggressive and confrontational, as logical. They are two different things."

Gil: "If communication was valued more - well, maybe, not *more*, but equally - and that's Giligan's point - why don't we look at both sides of the diagram and let's value

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

communication as much as we do rules. Communication might be a way out of a problem situation, rather than discovering the truth, because that is the rule-based way of looking at things."

Sue: "Well, Gil - yes, firstly, I value *Truth*. I think that this is the *most* important thing. Now, secondly, you can't have change unless you take risks. And you were saying there, Patricia, about Paul and his fellows in parliament there having battles. Well, okay, these battles might seem trivial, but they're *extremely important*. This is men at their best--"

Patricia: "My God, if that's--"

Sue: "--in the sense that they're taking risks, and they're striving to battle out what is true. It may seem petty, especially to women, because women don't value truth, and they don't value risks, and they don't value the things that men value - not at all. But what's important is just this: this battling it out. And this is where, as Kevin was saying before, there'll be those individuals come through that will strive to discover Truth."

Kevin: "Yes, your Paul Keatings and so on are not sages. They're not wise men. But they have some sort of ideals. They have some sort of absolutes, some sort of principles, however small they may be. And they battle and they suffer and they internalize things, and they don't cry all that often, and they're pretty tough. And you need that toughness in order to pursue the truth."

Gil: "But they're speaking for women. Women are left out of that notion of truth, because women won't be allowed to speak about the truth - they can't speak about it in the way men do. Men have to speak for

women, and I think *there's* the part that I want to reject about that theory."

Kevin: "I think when women can compete on male terms, which means on logical grounds--"

Gil: "Which you value above everything else."

Kevin: "Which I value above everything else, then they'll be respected for what they are--"

Gil: "Which is what?"

Kevin: "Reasoning people. They'll be treated as reasoning people. You know, the fact that all women are treated as inferiors is not just by chance! Now, Sue here, who we've invited back onto the program for a second time, is a rational woman, so David and I, and everybody I know, treat Sue as a man. This is what the word 'man' means to me."

Gil: "Why not put irrational women on your show then, if you want to use that word?"

Kevin: "We do!"

Patricia: "Instead of being treated as a man, why not treat her as a rational woman? I mean, it can go the other way too."

Kevin: "Well, I don't like to judge people purely on their physical form - that would be sexist - but I *will* judge them on their minds. Well, we've got to close up now, it's almost eleven o'clock. But be sure to tune-in next week because we'll have a group of people here talking about Ultimate Reality and Nature and the Infinite, and wonderful things like that. If anyone wants to write to us, they can write to PO Box 207, St Lucia, 4067. We'll see you next week."⁶¹

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

THE QUESTION OF SANITY

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -

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17th September, 1995

Guests:

- Peter Cotton - Clinical Psychologist
- Graham Priest - Professor of Philosophy at the University of Queensland

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

David: "Hello, and welcome to *The Hour of Judgment*. We bill this as the thinking man's radio program. It is a program in which we do all we can to promote reason in the world, and to encourage people to strive for absolute perfection. And, I'm glad to say, according to figures released in *Time Magazine* last week, *The Hour of Judgment* is currently regarded as the most popular program among sages. I'm David Quinn, and with me is Kevin Solway, and tonight we are going to look at the issue of psychological health. In other words, what is sanity? How do we judge a sane man? I would argue that only the rational person - that is, the one who is completely free of all illusions and false thoughts and, indeed, emotions - only such a person can be regarded as truly sane. But to help us explore these issues we have with us Peter Cotton, who is a Clinical Psychologist, and Graham Priest, who is a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Queensland. Welcome, the both of you."

Graham: "Thank you."

Peter: "Good evening."

David: "Welcome, Kevin."

Kevin: "Welcome to you."

David: "Alright, we might start off with you, Peter. You're a practicing clinical psychologist, and I assume the role is to make people with psychological problems more healthy. I wonder, what is your definition of psychological health?"

Peter: "It's a good question because most mainstream clinical psychology, I think you'd find, is dominated by the view that the absence of symptoms equals health. But if pressed to give a positive definition of health, most clinicians I think would have difficulty. Traditionally from Freud onwards psycho-

therapy and psychological systems have tended to view the world through the lens of psychopathology, so they've typically had fairly negative definitions. The most positive definition you would find in Freud is something to the effect that to be fully psychoanalyzed enables you to more effectively love and to work. Subsequent psychotherapists talk about things like maturity in relationships and adaptability and flexibility in dealing with the world. So it's only when you get to some of the humanistic streams in psychology, such as Maslow, that you get that sort of experiential or, more in a philosophical sense, a romantic, humanistic notion of positive health as self actualization."

David: "But how do you judge, yourself ... how do *you* judge who is a sane person? I mean, I, personally, regard virtually everybody in this world as being insane - and I mean in a clinical sense. Because they believe in things, and base their lives on things, that don't really exist. So they're very much like the old archetypal mad person in the asylum, who believes he's Napoleon or Jesus Christ. This person is actually believing in something which has no reality. So I would argue that most people are like this. For example, they believe in a self. They base their lives on a self. Now I would argue that a self has no real existence. So people who base their lives on a self are literally insane."

Graham: "Yes, but surely it's not just believing what's not true which makes you insane. Rather, it's believing things without good reason. For example, you may have come here by car tonight, and you believe your car is parked outside now. Now, someone may have nicked it five minutes ago for all you know. The fact that you believe your car is parked outside doesn't make you insane or irrational. It just means you have a well-grounded belief that happens to be false. That wouldn't make you insane, right?"

David: "But if you take the definition of insanity as believing something which doesn't actually exist ..."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Graham: "But you can have very good reasons for believing that something, which doesn't exist, does exist. I mean, there have been good theories in the past which postulated all kinds of entities, and for which there is very good evidence, which may turn out to be false in the end. But the people who believed them believed them for very good reasons - and they were hardly insane."

David: "Alright, let's take the concept of 'things'. You were saying that scientists have changed their theories about actual things. But the very notion of 'things' existing ... to my mind, 'things' have no real existence."

Graham: "What do you mean?"

David: "Well, because things have causes. When the causes change the things disappear, so they're like a dream. They're like a reflection. If you have a reflection in a mirror, and you take away the sunlight, or the reflective properties of the mirror, the reflected objects in the mirror disappear. So in this sense they are illusory. So I would argue that all things are like this."

Graham: "That's a rather swift jump. I mean, the fact that something in the mirror is illusory doesn't mean that this tea-cup is, for example."

David: "I was just giving an illustration. But the point still stands that because everything is dependent on causes, and when these causes change the things disappear, we can say they're illusory."

Graham: "Why?"

David: "Because they have no ultimate existence."

Graham: "But for the time that they exist, they exist. They're not eternal perhaps ..."

Kevin: "Yes, but they exist differently to the way people generally perceive them. When people perceive their own existence and the existence of other things, people perceive them as being independently, absolutely existent. They don't perceive the connectedness of themselves and all things, the infinite connectedness with the rest of the environment. So they are actually deluding themselves."

Graham: "That may be so, but that's rather different from saying it doesn't exist."

Kevin: "Things don't exist in the way that people generally use the term, so it's quite valid to say things don't exist."

Peter: "Well, then so what? I mean, what you're talking about is what Husserl called the 'natural attitude', which you need to get about in the everyday world. Then so what?"

Kevin: "Well, you don't need to be deluded to get about in the everyday world - though it helps [laughter]. For example, we can perceive things, and see their appearance ... we can look at an appearance in a mirror, and we can know that there is an appearance in the mirror, but we don't have to believe that the appearance in the mirror is actually a concrete, real, independent existence. Similarly, we can look around the world about us, and we can process the appearances, the things that we're seeing, but we don't have to go that extra step and say that all of the things we're seeing are independently, absolutely real. We don't have to get upset about them, and become emotional, and violent, or fall in love with them, and have this whole emotional life over these things which are really no different to reflections in a mirror."

Graham: "But why are they no different to reflections in a mirror?"

Kevin: "Because just as a reflection in a mirror is totally caused - it has its whole existence outside of itself in a way - in the same way all things in the Universe have their existence, or get their existence, from outside of themselves. They're a bit like a fountain. A fountain has a form that appears to us, and yet its existence is so infinitely fragile that one flick of the switch to stop the water pump and the fountain disappears."

Graham: "But to say that everything has its cause ... it doesn't follow from this that everything is in the same ontological category. And it doesn't follow that the image in a mirror is the same kind of reality as this tea-cup. I mean, you know the image isn't there - you can go behind the mirror and look at it, and it's not there - but turn the tea-cup around and you can see the other side. There's a difference of kind."

David: "Not when we're talking about what is ultimate."

Graham: "What do you mean by ultimate?"

David: "Well, I mean it in this sense: something which is ultimately real would have to exist totally separately from everything else. It would have to exist in its own right. That, to me, would be real existence."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Graham: "So this is God as traditionally conceived, and nothing else?"

David: "Whatever. It's just a definition. So when I look at everything in the world, nothing is like this. So nothing has this real existence, according to my definition."

Graham: "If that's what you mean, sure."

David: "Okay, so in this sense, to believe that anything has real existence, by this definition, would be an error on my part, wouldn't it? And to base my life on what I conceive to be ultimately unreal..."

Graham: "Yes, but if you think this tea-cup has absolute existence in that sense you'd have to be crazy, right? But it doesn't stop you functioning, drinking tea from it, etcetera."

Kevin: "But also, to get *emotional* over a tea-cup, or over a person ... because essentially there's no real difference between the tea-cup and a person - they're both things in the world."

Peter: "But there's a few steps in the middle there. You're making a bit of a leap. If we're going to talk phenomenology for a moment, the perception of the tea-cup is not given in your perception. That's constituted by an act of consciousness, with the conscious construction being a derivative product. So are you suggesting that reason, or rationality, is the primary, absolute reality? Is that where we're heading?"

Kevin: "Well, it depends on what we value. And, of course, we can define reality to be anything we like. For example, if you were a creation scientist you would define reality as the world coming into existence six thousand years ago, and Noah's ark and so on - this is reality, as they would define it. But personally, I would define reality as what is rationally true, absolutely true, as what we arrive at through the use of reason - the perfect use of reason. So reality, of course, is only how we define it to be. And using *reason* we find there's no real difference, in essence, between a human being and a tea-cup - or any other object for that matter - because they're both parts of the world and they both have causes. So we're mechanical in a sense - in the sense that we're part of cause and effect. So just as it would be insane to get emotional over a tea-cup - which has no free-will, which has no choice over what it does, it's just what it is - in the same sense it

would be insane to be emotional over a person, who also has no free-will, who is totally a victim, if you want to say this, of the laws of Nature and of cause and effect. Everything that a person does is caused by Nature."

Peter: "There's a lot of big steps in there ..."

Kevin: "Well, hopefully, during the hour we'll discuss some of these steps."

Peter: "We've moved a long way from insanity already!"

David: "No, no, we haven't at all. It all hinges on these things, because if nothing has real existence then people who believe in a real existence are insane."

Graham: "No, no, no, that doesn't follow."

David: "If it's true, I'm saying, if it's true--"

Graham: "To be insane is not simply to have false beliefs. There are many sane people who have false beliefs."

Kevin: "But to have false beliefs where all the evidence is to the contrary--"

Graham: "That's different."

Kevin: "Well, all the evidence which is around us in our everyday lives tells us that the things which we think are real are in fact not real."

Graham: "Well, you just defined reality a moment ago. When Peter asked you, you said, 'I define reality to be what is true'. Now is it true that there is a tea-cup sitting in front of us?"

Kevin: "Well, from a scientific point of view, we can never know for sure whether there is a tea-cup in front of us. It appears that there is, but it could be a projection of some sort. So from a scientific point of view, we don't know for sure."

Graham: "I'm not talking about knowledge. Is it true there's a tea-cup in front of us? Give me your best guess."

Kevin: "Well, logically it's true."

Graham: "Okay, so it is real, by your definition?"

Kevin: "Yes."

David: "Well, the *appearance* is real."

Kevin: "But how we interpret and how we process this appearance is what constitutes the difference between a wise person and an insane person."

Graham: "Okay, but I was just asking, from what you've just said, do you think there are things which are real?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "A wise person sees what is real, and insane person sees what is not real."

Graham: "Maybe, maybe not. We've moved again from the question of what's actually there to how you know what's there. And something could be there and you might have good reasons for believing it's not there, and vice versa."

Kevin: "But there are no good reasons, for example, for a person being emotional over something. Can either of you think of an example where a person would have good reasons to be emotional over anything at all?"

Graham: [to Peter] "This is yours!"

Peter: "What do you mean by emotion? Do you mean irrational feelings or something?"

Kevin: "You know what an emotion is - a feeling of love or a feeling of anger ... any kind of emotion at all, actually."

Graham: "Sure, it can be highly efficacious."

David: "What does that mean?"

Graham: "It means that if you're hyped-up about something you may well achieve what you want to do."

Peter: "Indeed, from a psychological point of view, the adaptive role of emotion is like a condensed motivation-action tendency which achieves results. It has a real evolutionary role. Emotion has its own purpose and meaning."

Graham: "Indeed, is it not true that one sign of psychopathy - I mean, of real insanity - is lack of emotion?"

Peter: "Indeed, that's what psychopathy is - a lack of feeling or empathy for other people. It's the core of psychopathy."

Kevin: "I would agree with you to the extent that if I wanted to destroy the whole world then some emotions would definitely aid me in my quest."

Peter: "Or if you wanted to run a race. Or if you wanted to give a passionate speech which people respond to and which inspires people. I mean, there's all sorts of culturally important--"

Kevin: "So whether emotions are valuable in fact depends on what our goal is. So if we do want to win a race, or destroy the world, or win the heart of some lassie, then emotions definitely play their part. But if we want wisdom ... if we want to arrive at Ultimate Reality, then what are the good reasons for

being emotional? What good are they if we want to actually live in reality?"

Graham: "Well, if your passion is to arrive at the nature of Ultimate Reality, then you have a *passion* for arriving at the nature of Ultimate Reality."

Kevin: "Okay, so that brings us to the question of whether emotions actually are true, and whether there's any rational basis to being emotional - other than the will of the person. If the things which we're being emotional about - even if it's our own life, or if we're not achieving everything that we want to achieve - then obviously we have some conception of what our own self is, and we're being emotional about that conception. Now if that conception is false, then it would follow that the emotion, also, is false."

Graham: "And what's a false emotion?"

Kevin: "One which has arisen out of irrational thought. And the irrational thought in this case would be the concept of the self. For example, if a person did not conceive of an independent self then it would be absolutely impossible for him to be emotional, or to arouse any sort of emotional feeling in him - there would just be a sort of pure, reflective reasoning. That's all that would occur to a perfectly rational person. Have you thought about this before, you as a philosopher?"

Graham: "If there's no such thing as a self then it's difficult to see how your rational people could do anything, including think."

Kevin: "Well, of course, there's always the appearance of a self, obviously--"

Graham: "And so the appearance of thought ..."

Kevin: "There's the appearance of everything, yes."

Peter: "What's the reflexiveness that holds together the thoughts?"

Kevin: "Consciousness."

Peter: "What's consciousness?"

Kevin: "Well, consciousness is essentially the same as anything else in the world. It's something which appears to us."

Peter: "Ah, well, from a phenomenological point of view, that's not true because consciousness is really the mode in which things appear to us. And what Husserl did was to first say that: okay, well, if you want to get down to what is rock-bottom, you have to bracket the natural attitude, which is the everyday sense of things, and then you start

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

to get to how things are perceived - the operations of subjectivity that constitute things. And then the other is about the idealizations of science, and showing how any scientific production, any rational production, presupposes the operation of consciousness that produces it. Therefore subjectivity is always prior to any idealization of science and any rational product. And so what you come down to at rock-bottom is what Husserl starts to talk about in terms of a 'passive synthesis', which is sort of a pre-subjective anonimity, or in Heidegger it's called the Ereignis, or the locus of the clearing, or in Merleau-Ponty it's called originary temporalizing. And it's this differentiation which is the locus, and this is necessarily prior to rationality."

Kevin: "Yes, but this is basically consciousness you're talking about now?"

David: "Duality, isn't it?"

Peter: "Well, it's the beginning of duality - originary temporalizing - that's if you're a European phenomenologist."

Kevin: "But still, whatever we can give a name - no matter whether it's consciousness or whatever--"

Peter: "Well, that presupposes a relation to an object, which is always derivative. And if you go further with Husserl and some of the more contemporary phenomenologists, they talk about what is more primary - which is life, or originary temporalizing. And the knowledge of life isn't the relation to an object. That's not its essence. It doesn't have a relation to an object. So its more primary than thought. It's a different sort of 'thing', if you like."

Kevin: "This is consciousness you're speaking about now, although you haven't used that word?"

Peter: "Yes."

Kevin: "But nonetheless, the fact that we give it a word 'consciousness', it still appears to us in some way."

Peter: "No, consciousness is the act of things appearing."

Kevin: "Regardless--"

Peter: "A tea-cup is already constituted by an ensemble of operations that allow it to appear in the way that it is."

Kevin: "I'm not saying consciousness is a physical thing in any sense. I'm saying it's an abstract thing. It's an object of the mind, and we use it for practical purposes."

Peter: "Well, I'm a little bit of an idealist too, but I don't necessarily agree with your sort of enlightenment type march of pure reason as the primary goal of existence."

Kevin: "Well, that's a good subject to talk about. Do you think there's problems with people marching down this road of pure reason?"

Peter: "Well, let me give you a mundane example. In psychology and schools of psychotherapy, the parallel here is with an approach called R.E.T - Rational Emotive Therapy. And the idea of Rational Emotive Therapy is basically to convince people who are anxious or depressed that their depression or anxiety stems from their irrational beliefs about the world. And the American person who developed R.E.T, a fellow called Albert Ellis, engages people in rational discussion. He calls his therapy 'Socratic dialogue', where basically he tries to argue with them and brow-beat them about how irrational their beliefs are and how they need to have more rational beliefs about the world, and then everything will be rosy and they'll be happy."

Kevin: "And he doesn't have many results I presume?"

Peter: "Well, it's sort of fizzled out a bit as a way of helping people because it's fairly limited. Because there seems to be a bit more to life than--"

Kevin: "Well, a person has to put value on reason for a start, before they can listen to rational debate, surely?"

Peter: "Well, that too."

Kevin: "Yes, all right. This putting value on reason though ... If I had to define what health was, I would say that it's putting value on reason. This is something which very few people do these days. Of course, everybody puts value on reason to some small degree in order to get through their daily lives. When a person has to pay some money at the check-out at the supermarket they have to use reason. But to actually do philosophy ... to actually philosophize about the existence of things, or about what the self is ... You know, people live a whole life of sixty or seventy years, or however long they live, and in many cases they have never actually thought about what their own self is! Despite the fact that they've had to live with it for their whole lifetime, they've never thought about what the

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

self is! Now I would define it as healthy to actually think about what the self is, and yet in psychology this doesn't happen. I've studied some courses in psychology at University and there is no talk about what the self is and understanding the self. There's plenty of talk of understanding the psychology of the self, but this is different."

Peter: "Yes, well, this is really a sociological issue because most contemporary psychology ... it's a sort of sociology of knowledge issue because contemporary psychology identifies itself these days as a science. Many Australian psychology programs have moved into science faculties, or medical faculties, because that's where more funding, more grants, more status are. And you only have to go to lots of the recent sociological literature, or French thinkers like Foucault who talk about this sort of dimension, to see the way in which these knowledge forms are established. So there's good reason why psychology doesn't talk about the self. In my old program which I went through at Melbourne University, we had the late great F. Knopflemer who ran a program on "The Self", but after he died they appointed a statistician to replace him. So we lost any sort of philosophical strand within the program."

Kevin: "Well, what about philosophy? Is there any real, serious investigation into the self in academic philosophy?"

Graham: "Oh sure, yes. I mean, the reason why psychologists don't like it is that it's too hard."

Peter: "Yes."

Graham: "You can't put it in a bottle and measure it. Whereas philosophers really love that kind of thing. In some ways, philosophy is just the subjects which are too hard for anyone else to worry about."

Kevin: "One of my favourite subjects is Characterology. I don't know, Peter, if you've ever studied a fellow called Otto Weininger?"

Peter: "No."

Kevin: "Well, he was someone who actually hated psychology. He said that psychology should be about character - that is, it should be about how a person actually lives, and the values of a person. And he said that the psychology of his day - and this is going back a hundred years ago - had merely become about sensations and had become an empirical science. This was a hundred years ago! So

things haven't changed one iota in a hundred years. But he said that character was the most important thing if we want to achieve health. And he divided the human consciousness, or the human mind, or the human desires, into the masculine and the feminine, because he saw two different basic psychologies in life: the feminine psychology - mainly in women - and male psychology, mainly in men. Yet when I studied psychology at University there was no talk of male psychology and female psychology, which I thought was very odd, seeing as, to my observation, there is a very large difference between male and female psychology. Have either of you any ideas about this contentious issue? Have you noticed any difference in how men and women do philosophy, for example, Graham?"

Graham: *[long pause in which he struggles to speak and then laughs]*

Kevin: "You came to the studio tonight with a female philosopher whose main interest was sexual fantasies, for example. Are there many male philosophers with those interests?"

Graham: "Sexual fantasies? Oh yes! Yes, I think it's very difficult to generalize about the different ways that people do philosophy. I think, drawing from my very limited experience of how people do philosophy, it wouldn't be right to say that there is a gender difference."

Kevin: "And what about yourself, Peter, in your observations with your patients?"

Peter: "Well, in terms of psychology, the issue is addressed in terms of gender differences, and it's a fairly contentious issue as to what gender differences there are in things like the study of mathematics - there are all sorts of difficulties about how it's studied and whether the way that it's studied influences the results and so on. So it's like studying race. There are all sorts of problematic issues in the way that you define the terms on which you build your investigation before you even get to the empirical side. But in terms of patients ... well, culturally and statistically, it is the case that women are more likely to present for assistance to mental health professionals than males, and that's largely a cultural phenomenon. Males are less likely to acknowledge personal difficulties, less likely to want to go and talk to a professional about them."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "And why do you say it's largely a cultural phenomena? Have tests been done on this with different cultures?"

Peter: "Well, that's a good question ..."

Kevin: "It could be genetic, couldn't it?"

Peter: "It's possible. But then there's a whole other set of questions there too. And much of the research supporting the biochemical and genetic basis of a lot of mental illness has many problems with it. A lot of it is structured in a way because it is funded by pharmaceutical companies and so on."

Kevin: "What do you think about the idea that traditionally men are supposed to be rational, and women are supposed to be emotional? And when men have problems, supposedly, they tend to internalize those problems. They don't want to share those problems with other people. Some people say that men suppress their emotions. Have you observed this, and do you think it's healthy or unhealthy?"

Peter: "Well, it's generally unhealthy to repress emotions because repression of emotion, even in a crass empirical way, can be linked to acceleration of some forms of cancer, if done over a long long time - increased blood pressure and so on. But that's at a fairly crass empirical level. What you're talking about is a much larger issue."

Kevin: "I'm thinking of this: the fashion these days is to say that men are responsible for all the evil in the world, and that men have got no idea how to live their lives, because they repress their emotions and so on, and women have all the wisdom in this regard. But I actually think it's healthy not to share your feelings and emotions with other people. If you have some kind of a problem, then I think the healthy thing to do is to work the thing out yourself - even if it's at the cost of your health, physical and mental."

Graham: "So what makes it healthy?"

Kevin: "Don't forget that I base everything on this idea of truth and reason and individuality. These are the things I value above everything else. So if it helps a person to arrive at a point which is a lot closer to Truth - by working out their own problems and by developing an inner strength, rather than being dependent on other people and outside things - well, then this is healthy. Because even though the person may die younger, they will become a better character. Don't

forget that character is very important to me. So even though a person suffers a lot more in their life, if they develop *character* ..."

Peter: "So are you harking back to the sort of Aristotelian idea of Virtue ethics, where development of character is what it's all about?"

Kevin: "Well, I think character is the only thing worth having. I mean, I'd hate to live a whole life and just be a clone, a copy, a plastic person, like so many people are today. There are no characters today - or very, very few. There are no geniuses. I think the production of geniuses is the sign of a healthy society, and the production of plastic people, like we have today in our American style culture, is a sign of incredible insanity."

Peter: "Well again, there's a whole cluster of things in there. I'm not sure, specifically, what you can relate to the production of genius--"

Kevin: "Well, one thing that would help genius would be the internalizing of all thoughts."

Graham: "I think that is most unlikely. I think that if you were alone on a desert island with your emotions and your books you'd produce absolutely nothing. I mean, people are social animals. They need social interactions of all kinds to produce anything. You wouldn't be here if it wasn't for at least two other people, and presumably lots of others."

Kevin: "Yes, but you're talking about creation--"

Graham: "No, I'm talking about what you are."

Kevin: "Yes, but my idea of a genius is not necessarily someone who creates. For example, I don't regard artists and poets and so on as geniuses. I would regard a genius as someone who has a fundamental understanding of the whole Universe - the whole of Nature. So through understanding the basis of the whole of the Universe a genius understands everything in it."

Graham: "Well, there are not many are there."

Peter: [laughs]

David: "Which is why Kevin was talking about plastic people and lack of character. So this internalizing process develops the independent character and thinking processes which leads to this understanding of Ultimate Reality."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "And women don't have it. This is not a part of female psychology."

Graham: "That's a rather vast claim. But leaving that aside, some of the greatest minds in history have claimed that they were very dependent on other people. For example, Newton, one of the greatest intellects, said that if he was able to see further than other people it was because he had stood on the shoulders of giants."

David: "Well, I don't regard Newton as much chop ... compared to someone like the Buddha."

Graham: "The Buddha too was drawing on a strong tradition in Hindu philosophy. He wasn't coming out of nowhere."

Kevin: "Well, in a sense nothing that we do is a matter of free-will. Everything that we do is caused by Nature. So even a genius is caused by Nature."

Peter: "Well, there's a few big steps in there too. We could spend an hour talking about what you mean by free-will, what you mean by determinism, and what you mean by causality. You've just condensed a couple of hundred years of debate in the Western philosophical tradition about those terms into one sentence. We need to unpack them a little bit more, perhaps, to see if we're talking about the same things."

David: "Yes, you tend to be chopping and changing there a bit, Kevin. I think we should concentrate a bit more on this idea of dependency. So someone like the Buddha, my ideal image of the Buddha, a perfectly wise man or woman, someone with a perfect understanding of reality - this person is non-attached in an emotional sense. So, sure, he needs other people to get his food--"

Graham: "And his ideas."

David: "Well, yes, to a degree. But he has also reached total independence in another sense, in that his understanding is grounded in reality, and so he's no longer taken-in by other people's ideas. At least, he's processed them and has related them to his understanding of reality."

Peter: "But he doesn't get there by reasoning; he gets there by meditating, doesn't he? Just keeping still and being part of the world - just being."

David: "No, that's a popular myth. He actually got there by meditating on reasoning. He actually reasoned to the very end about

the nature of existence, and all that sort of stuff, the nature of self. So it's actually an intellectual process that he has meditated upon, and via this he's achieved his enlightenment. Such a person has no attachment, no emotional attachment, to any other person, for example. A Buddha wouldn't be married. He wouldn't--"

Kevin: "Well, a good example would be that a Buddha would not be easily hypnotized. Now when we compare men and women the data shows very clearly that women are far far more easily hypnotized than men--"

Peter: "I don't agree, actually. That's actually not true."

Kevin: "And even with suggestibility tests, it has been shown that women are far more suggestible."

Peter: "No, no, this is a very dangerous argument. The data on hypnotizability ... it's shaped like a bell curve. There's about ten percent of the population who are low hypnotizables; most are medium; and five to ten are very high. But gender distribution is a different thing, and I don't think there is any major difference in gender distribution."

Kevin: "I think you must have seen different figures to me. Well, what about suggestibility? This is getting away now from hypnotizability. The figures I've seen show that women are an order of magnitude more suggestible than men are."

Peter: "I don't believe that, either. I don't think that's true, either."

Kevin: "Have you actually looked into this closely?"

David: "Well, surely, it would relate to the traditional idea of woman as being passive and submissive."

Peter: "So we're not talking about empirical beings here - actual women and actual men - we're talking about ideal types?"

David: "Yes, ideal types, but they still have relationships to actual beings, though. So women, generally, are closer to the submissive side of the scale, if you like, and men are closer to the domineering side - that is how I'll characterize it for this argument, anyway. So if that's the case, if women are generally more submissive, then they would be more suggestible, because they are submitting to an authority."

Graham: "That's a very big 'if', though."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Peter: "That's a very big 'if'! ... It's a very interesting argument ... a very dangerous argument too!"

David: "Well, I'm only repeating what women say themselves."

Peter: "Not the women I hang around with."

[laughter]

David: "The major feminists, for example - the spokespeople for certain women, anyway - the academics. Twenty or thirty years ago, Germaine Greer and others were of the view that women had been conditioned to--"

Peter: "Socially constructed."

Graham: "That is to say, there are stereotypes."

David: "But women are encouraged not to be geniuses, not to be total inventors. So all of our history has been basically created by men--"

Graham: "Well, the stuff which men have written about, that's true. But there's a lot of history which doesn't get written about by male historians."

Kevin: "Like knitting, for example."

David: "Like inventing the chocolate chip cookie."

Graham: "No, a lot of our culture is female based."

David: "Yes, but we're talking about the basic inventions of science, for example--"

Kevin: "Or philosophy."

Graham: "There are many famous female philosophers."

Kevin: "Famous but nobody has ever heard of them!"

Graham: "That's because most of history is written by men."

Kevin: "Funny about that. Is there something else you wanted to say, David?"

David: "No."

Kevin: "Okay, well, I think we should move on from this subject of men and women, although I think it's fairly obvious that women are far more passive and suggestible than men are. I mean, you only have to look at them! Look at the way they dress! You know, the flimsy see-through, silken clothes they wear ... it's a reflection of what's going on inside their minds."

Graham: "Does that mean that the fact that you're wearing opaque clothes mean that your thought is opaque?"

Kevin: "It is opaque. It's opaque to you, obviously!"

Graham: "Now this is a rather swift association of ideas."

Kevin: "Men like to internalize things. Men value privacy."

Peter: "For all those female listeners out there, here's the address of the studio. Come in right now!"

Kevin: "You'd be surprised what we've got away with on this program. It goes completely over most people's heads. I mean, you only have to look at the way women dress - they're *advertising* what is going on in inside their brains. See- through clothes, see-through minds."

Peter: "How much of that is socially constructed? I mean, there is a big, big, big, big leap in every step of your argument."

David: "It's irrelevant what the cause is at this stage. We're just trying to establish what the reality is - the situation at this moment."

Graham: "I think what Peter was saying was that he doesn't believe a bar of this, and the reasons that were being given for this weren't very persuasive. And I must confess I agree with him."

Kevin: "Well, all we can go on is what we see in the world. And I think all social commentators all through history - and I know they've all been men ... well, they haven't all been men, actually - there have been some masculine types of women who've also tried their hand at it - and they've all, unanimously, seen women as being passive."

Graham: "Nonsense. John Stuart Mill, for example, did not."

Kevin: "Well, I don't know the details of John Stuart Mill, but maybe he was a feminine type of man, I don't know."

Graham: "No, he had a very happy married life to a very good philosopher, Harriet Taylor."

Kevin: "You've just proved my point! I think masculine types of men don't get married. They value their independence and their freedom. They value their *freedom* and their genius to such a great degree, that they would never, ever compromise their minds by getting into an emotional relationship with a member of the opposite sex."

Peter: "Why this incredible value on autonomy over sociality? What about the value

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

of community and the interpersonal world, in terms of living the good life and--"

Kevin: "Yes, well this is getting back down to what we really value. Now I live in a very community type of place up at Maleny, where they value community above all. Truth actually comes very low on the scale, if at all. So I'm a bit of an odd-bod up there because I don't value community whatsoever, but I do value Truth - it's the only thing which I value. We're coming back now to what we mean by health. I would say that valuing community may have been of use at some time in the past, during the evolution of our species. Ignorance and emotions, and all of these things, had their place in our survival - in wiping out all the opposition, for example: there is a large gap between us and the other apes. Presumably there were intermediary forms, and presumably we played a large part in wiping them out. Our emotions and our community life would have played an important role in destroying the competition. But I think we've reached a stage now where our community is so large that we're actually destroying the whole planet. It's time we started transferring our values from community and from happiness, from community happiness, and love, and children, and family life, and all these nice warm wishy-washy things, and started getting *real*, and started to put value on reason and independence - and masculinity"

Graham: "Just because ... oh!"

Peter: *[laughs]*

Graham: "Just because various multinationals are screwing-up the environment, it doesn't follow that communities should be devalued."

Kevin: "It's mothers who are screwing up the environment by having children, isn't it?"

Graham: "Noooo ..."

Kevin: "Overpopulation is the major--"

Graham: "It's what people do, and it's the causes of what they do ... but I don't want to get distracted from the main issue, which was this claim that you should down-value communities. Because you can't live without a community. This is community radio, for example. Apart from everything else, obviously you value community otherwise you wouldn't be doing this. And you couldn't possibly exist if it wasn't for community."

David: "We should make a distinction between a community as a collection of individuals living together for practical purposes, and this emotional overlay that people put on. Now I'd say that this emotional overlay - this emotional bonding between people - causes an awful lot of harm. It causes the violence and the wars and the suffering. It causes a hell of a lot of suffering."

Graham: "And the absence of it causes psychopathy too. I mean, as Aristotle said a long time ago, anything carried to an extreme is going to be bad. The best thing is the Golden Mean."

David: "So you would consider the Buddha to be a total psychopath, I suppose?"

Kevin: "What do you think about Buddhism, Graham ... as a philosopher ... as a logical philosopher?"

Graham: "It's a very noble religion - much more noble than many of the Western religions."

David: "Okay, but the Buddha valued non-attachment, and the renouncing of love, and all the sort of stuff which we've been just talking about."

Peter: "But compassion has a big role in Buddhism."

David: "Yes, but the Buddha means 'compassion' in a very different way to what is commonly meant by compassion. What is commonly meant by compassion is this emotional love which causes all the violence and the wars. But the Buddha's version of compassion is based on wisdom. It is based on encouraging people to give up their attachments."

Kevin: "It's a kind of understanding. The compassion of an enlightened person is basically no more than understanding. So understanding other people, for example - that is what compassion is, and nothing more. Whereas in our everyday human life - or animal life I should call it; what I see around me is animal life - what people call 'compassion' is no more than animal type of emotions. It's very unhealthy."

Graham: "There's a very famous philosophical argument to the effect that you would never do anything unless you had emotions. You can have all the beliefs you like, but unless you have some desires, some emotions, you don't do anything."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "Well, I'll give you an example. A tree doesn't have emotions, presumably, and yet it does things."

Graham: "No."

Kevin: "No what?"

Graham: "Causes operate on it. It just moves. It doesn't act."

Kevin: "Yes, but do we act? Do we have a free-will? Let's look at this question. You're suggesting that we are different from a tree in the sense that we have some kind of extra ..."

Graham: "No, I suggest that we *act*, unlike a tree."

Kevin: "And what is involved in this?"

Graham: "The action is a result of your desires and your beliefs."

Kevin: "And all of these are caused?"

Graham: "Sure."

Kevin: "All of our actions and our choices?"

Graham: "Sure, but I mean your actions are caused by your beliefs and your desires in the way that the behaviour of a plant is not, because a plant doesn't have beliefs and desires. Now, to get back to the point I was making, you can have as many beliefs as you like but unless you have desires as well you have no ground for doing anything. You have to have desires, otherwise you just don't act."

Kevin: "Not necessarily so."

Graham: "Tell me beliefs on which you would act without any desires."

Kevin: "Well, we're talking about emotional desires now. I'd better say what I mean by a desire. A normal desire which people have is an emotional desire. Some personal thing is resting on it, and that's why they desire something. They desire to be loved, they desire to be wanted and admired and so on. But a wise kind of desire would be a purely reasoned one. It would have no emotion attached to it whatsoever. For example, I've reached the idea that I don't want to live an emotional life whatsoever. Any kind of emotional temptation has no weight with me. So I think to myself, 'Why should I bother living?', for example. 'Why should I desire to have my next meal?' And then I think, 'Well, why not? If I decide not to have my next meal, then that's also making some sort of a choice'."

Graham: "Then why choose one rather than the other?"

Kevin: "Well, because I get hungry! So I'm acting like a tree."

Graham: "But you have the ability not to do this. If you go and eat, it's because you choose to."

Kevin: "But it's not an emotional choice."

Graham: "Well, it's a desire that you have, to feed yourself."

Kevin: "Yes, but it's not an emotional desire."

Graham: "Well, I bet that if I wrapped you up in prison for about three weeks it would become pretty emotional!"

Kevin: "Yes, but the wiser I am, the less emotional I would become. So if I was perfectly wise I wouldn't become emotional at all, because I would just accept--"

Graham: "Why is it wise not to be emotional?"

Kevin: "Because emotions are the cause of all the violence and ignorance in the world."

Graham: "So are belief systems. Why not just say that you shouldn't have any beliefs."

Kevin: "True beliefs are good."

Graham: "Well, then true emotions are good too."

Kevin: "And what's the example of a true emotion?"

Graham: "One that's rational."

Kevin: "And what's the example of a rational emotion? I've never seen one."

Graham: "Okay, for example, if you're very kind to me, give me a cup of coffee, invite me along to the studio, say nice things, and I get VERY ANGRY! - that's irrational. If you stamp on my foot and punch me in the face and I get angry - that's rational."

Kevin: "No. If I punch you in the face, for example, then there are reasons why I punch you in the face."

Graham: "Yes."

Kevin: "I may not have personally decided to punch you in the face. I may be a puppet, and some puppeteer has made me punch you in the face. And yet you would become angry. And presumably you would be angry with me, or with the whole world, or with yourself - your anger would be directed towards *something*, and this is irrational because--"

Graham: "This is not irrational. If you give me all those facts and I'm still angry, then it's irrational."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "But you have all those facts without me having to give them to you. You have them already."

Graham: "Well, no. That's a very big claim. And we come back to this question about free-will and you being a puppet. Now I don't believe for a moment you're a puppet of any kind of forces."

Kevin: "I'm a puppet of Nature, though, aren't I? I mean, Nature makes me do everything that I do."

Graham: "Yes, but being a puppet is different."

Kevin: "How? I mean, if I have no free-will ... Now our listeners couldn't see that, but Graham has just grabbed my arm and is moving it up and down, illustrating why I *am* a puppet! He's just proved my point!"

Graham: "No, no, my point is exactly that when you move your arm, it's quite different from someone pulling the strings."

Kevin: "No, it's not."

Graham: "The fact that the cause comes from inside makes a difference?"

Kevin: "But the cause that comes from inside ultimately comes from outside."

Peter: "So you're a behaviorist?"

David: "There's no origination to the cause. The cause may seem like it's inside, but--"

Graham: "So what?"

Kevin: "So we're all puppets."

Graham: "No, it doesn't follow. There's a difference between the causes that come from within, and the causes that are imposed on you."

David: "Well, we can make a distinction in that way for practical purposes, but we're talking *ultimately* here. So if, ultimately, there is no origination of this causal process which leads to me talking and moving my arms, and if the causes go back out of me, then, ultimately, I'm empty of everything, aren't I?"

Peter: "So you're a radical behaviorist, then? All of the contents inside your being/mind can be exhaustively accounted for, specified in a calculus if we have a sophisticated enough program?"

David: "No, no, no. Not like that. I can't predict anything that happens."

Peter: "But in principle you could--?"

David: "Not in principle either."

Peter: "In retrospect, though ..."

Kevin: You'd need a computer that's as powerful as the entire universe.

Peter: "In the debate about artificial intelligence, what about the question of meaning? What is meaning?"

Kevin: "Well, we've been talking about meaning. I would regard ourselves as artificial intelligences. And meaning is something we've been having a lot of difficulty with here. We've been talking about values and what is healthy. So we've been talking about meaning, and whether it's possible for us, as artificial intelligences, to actually have meaning. I think that's what we've actually been talking about."

Peter: "I'm a bit thrown by the use of the term 'artificial intelligence', because it's usually--"

David: "We are robots. Or dummies."

Kevin: "Or puppets."

David: "Yes, there's no ultimate difference between artificial intelligences and ourselves, in that we're following causal processes."

Peter: "But that's precisely what a whole two decades of philosophy has demonstrated! It has demonstrated why artificial intelligence is in principle limited in terms of being able to think."

David: "Well, we don't know this. It's just speculation, isn't it. The computer industry is in its infancy."

Peter: "Well, contemporary thinkers like Hubert Dreyfuss have claimed to have demonstrated, in principle, that it is impossible for a computer to think."

David: "I'm a computer and I think! It depends what we mean by these things."

Peter: "It certainly does."

David: "My thoughts originate out of a mechanical process."

Graham: "Or biochemical."

David: "Yes, but it's mechanical in the sense that there's a causal process happening. One thing causes another, blah, blah, blah - so it's mechanical. You know, I'm made of parts."

Graham: "Sure."

David: "Right, so in theory we could make artificial neurons, and artificial chemicals, which simulate everything, and create these artificial machines who believe they're human."

Graham: "If we got a biochemical dopelpelganger of you, he would *be* human."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

David: "Yes, that's right. There'd be no difference. For all we know, we could be artificially constructed, and we just believe we're human. The point is that we're still part of the causal process, and this causal process goes back forever ..."

Graham: "Sure."

Kevin: "And so nothing originates inside our minds."

Graham: "Sure."

Kevin: "And that's why I said we're puppets - in the sense that my actions don't originate in my mind. It may appear that way, and we may speak in that way for practical purposes. But in actual fact, when you trace the origination of my actions they go out to Nature, and to the totality."

Graham: "They're still yours."

Kevin: "We say they're mine."

Graham: "They *are* yours. I mean, that's what you is."

Kevin: "No, it's not true, because you, in some respects, are actually causing my behaviour."

Graham: "Sure."

Kevin: "So my actions are in fact your actions, because you're causing them."

Graham: "No."

David: "In fact, we make up what the self is. At bottom, we make it up - we think it up. And we might choose to draw the boundary around our body which encapsulates our self; other cultures might say that the self is the whole tribe; others might say that the self is inside the brain."

Peter: "Well, in contemporary Western society ... I agree with you that there is a sense in which the sense of a unified self as a distinct entity from the world may be illusory, but it's, as someone said, a necessary fiction - because without it ... that's the definition of psychosis."

David: "But it's still a fiction, though. Yes, it might be necessary, but still it is ultimately not real, because it cannot be separated from anything else. There's no boundary between the 'self' and 'other'."

Peter: "But saying that it can't be separated doesn't mean that it's not real. That's another step."

David: "Well, it is in my case. I mean, the self is just equivalent to a thought. It's like an imagining. It has no more reality than the word "Wednesday", for example. The word

'Wednesday' has a use - you can say it comes after Tuesday, but it's not real. We've made it up, just for practical purposes."

Graham: "Wednesdays are very real! I mean, the word "Wednesday" is a made-up word, but the day Wednesday is very real."

David: "Well, not really, because the actual 'day' is illusory. It can't be separated from the two nights."

Graham: "Well, I hope not, it's pay day! It's vague, that's true, but reality is often vague."

David: "Right, so I'd say that everything is fake."

Kevin: "Even the vagueness itself is vague."

Graham: "Sure."

Kevin: "The vagueness is so vague it disappears. It's so vague it's illusory."

Graham: "No, what's vague is not necessarily illusory."

Kevin: "It's illusory if people believe it's an actual, real existence."

Graham: "A vague thing can be a real existence. You've just pointed out that your boundaries are rather vague."

Kevin: "Yes, but even the vagueness of the boundaries are vague--"

Graham: "Yes, it's a well-known problem."

Kevin: "--and on and on and on. And if you can't find what this vagueness is that we're talking about, if you can't find any kind of a boundary whatsoever, then you're quite justified in saying that it doesn't exist."

Graham: "No."

David: "Well, I wouldn't say that these boundaries are vague. I mean, we just make that up as well. There's no such thing as these boundaries in the slightest degree. They're not vague or sharply defined - unless we create them to be so. We *create* the boundaries, and they're either vague or sharply defined depending on how we conceive of them. So what I'm saying is that there are no boundaries at all - that is, we are infinite. So to base your life on what is finite, to base it on the self, is insane ... or at least extremely foolish."

Kevin: "Well, we're running a bit short of time. This is a discussion we could do for another sixty hours. Is there anything either of you would like to say before we close up?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Peter: "... Huh ... I'm sitting here stunned ..."

Graham: "I'd like to go out with the question of sanity in the light of what I've been hearing for the last hour."

[*Laughter*]

David: "Do you think we should book ourselves into your clinic there, Peter?"

Peter: "Yes, three years on the couch!"

David: "Well, next week Kevin and I will be talking to Paul Davies. That's right, Professor Paul Davies, author of *The Mind of God* and *God and the New Physics* and so forth. So make sure to tune-in then. And thanks Peter Cotton, Clinical Psychologist, and Graham Priest, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Queensland, and we'll see you next time. Bye."⁶²

THE FUTURE OF THE SPECIES

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Guest: Russel Kelly - Eco-psychologist, and employee of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Commission.

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

I was glad to have Russell Kelly on the program as he was someone who could articulate better than most the ever-popular "everything is uncertain and there are many paths to wisdom" philosophy. He was fully into postmodernism with its beloved emphasis on "deconstruction", a school of thought which basically states that all knowledge is moulded by social and historical forces, and that no one individual can lay a legitimate claim upon Ultimate Truth. What makes Russell more interesting than most of these post-modernist exponents is that he finds it very difficult to dismiss the concept of the wise man. He had read Kierkegaard in his youth, for example, which seemed to have had a lasting effect on him - it may have caused him to reflect a little upon the spiritual path and what it implied. Thus, by the time I had met him several months ago, his mind was slightly open, just a touch, to the possibilities of perfection. He was, moreover, capable of a certain clarity of thought and possessed a good appreciation of logic. But he also had a lot of attachments, not least of which were love and women. Looking back on it all, I think he must have come to a point in his life when spirituality began to scare him. He obviously decided, consciously or unconsciously, that being an individual with all its attendant sufferings just wasn't for him, and more or less decided to block the whole thing completely. And yet ... and yet, even to this day, in spite of his resistance, he still finds himself becoming inspired whenever he hears the words of a wise man. These days he concerns himself with the environmental cause and the plight of the Australian Aborigines. At the time of this program, he had spent several years working with ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Commission), and had just begun a PhD thesis on "the concept of self and its relationship to the

environment". He believes that the key solution to the environmental problems of the world lies in altering our concept of self to embrace the whole biosphere. This is in stark contrast to our own position on the matter which is that we should eliminate the self altogether. The following conversation starts off exploring this particular issue, before moving off into deeper and more significant areas than merely saving the planet.

D . Q

David: "Hello and welcome to the humblest radio program in the world, *The Hour of Judgment*. My name is David Quinn, and I'm an up-and-coming sage who lives at West End. But sitting beside me is someone who literally embodies humility - he is probably the humblest person I know - and that is, of course, Kevin Solway, our regular, self-proclaimed expert on reality. Tonight, we're going to explore the nature of wisdom. In particular, we will look at wisdom in the context of all the environmental problems of the world. I'm sure it's not necessary for me to spell out in great detail what these problems are: exploding population, massive deforestation, species extinction, rapidly diminishing resources such as fertile land and water, possible greenhouse catastrophe . . . the list goes on and on. And so we will go into this issue a bit and talk about the survival of the human race and how to best save the planet. Now there are an increasing number of people who believe that the overriding cause for all this environmental destruction is our obsession with reason and logic, especially in the West, together with an overabundance of masculine aggressiveness. They say that we should embrace the more intuitive and more feminine values found in certain indigenous cultures, as well as in women, which tend to stress the interconnectedness between things, or between the human race and the rest of Nature. They say that we should stop limiting our concept of self to the physical individual and instead expand it to include the whole community, or even to

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

include the whole of the biosphere. They say that by limiting our concept of self to the physical body we are creating alienation in the world - alienation between individuals, and between the human race and Nature. As I say, this is becoming more and more of a popular view, so we'll go into it and see whether it's actually valid. And to help us in this we are joined by Russell Kelly, who is actually doing a Phd thesis on eco-psychology. That's an interesting term, Russell. What does it mean?"

Russell: "Well, eco-psychology is a relatively new phenomenon, and is a new way of talking about psychology and a possible relationship between people and the earth. Part of answering your question would be to say what psychology is. And I suspect that what we're talking about with eco-psychology is a certain sort of discourse that may be useful in talking about our relationship with not just the physical environment, not just the social environment - which mainstream psychology has tended to focus on of late, as well as what's going on within the individual - but also focus on possible relationships between people and the natural environment, on the greater reality that goes beyond individuals."

David: "So you would say that our actions come from our psychology, and by changing our psychology our actions will thereby change. So if we change the concept of self then this will have beneficial effects on the environment."

Russell: "Yes."

David: "So would you agree with what I said in the introduction - that we should embrace a wider concept of self to include the environment, for the sake of the environment."

Russell: "Yes. I think it has been fundamental to much of the environmental movement since its beginning in the early twentieth century, that in order to change the world we must first change the self. One way of understanding this is to think about identity - relating selfhood to identity. There is a natural tendency to nurture or defend those things which we might include in our sense of who we are. An example of that would be people whom we love, family, our possessions perhaps, pets - things which we hold dear to us, and which may form part of our identity. We

don't have to think very much to defend people we love, people which are close to us. We don't make a cost-benefit analysis - we respond emotionally. And the thinking, certainly within the so-called deep ecology movement, and in a lot of eco-psychology, is that through certain practices and through developing certain discourses about the self and our relationship with our natural environment, we can actually expand the sense of who we are to include not just our car and our possessions and our loved ones, but so that we respond emotionally and directly to threats to the natural environment with actions of nurture or defence."

Kevin: "This is interesting. If we look at the cause of all the wars that we've seen throughout history, I think we could say that all of those have come about because of this feeling of loving your family or your country. Each country loves their fellow members and unite in hatred of their neighbours. So this kind of philosophy seems to lead towards violence, doesn't it? So if we globally came together as a family, that would help us to go to war against other races, perhaps?"

Russell: "I think the thesis you make is a big one. But in some ways it seems that your analysis fits-in with my understanding, in that it's precisely a very limited sense of self to only include blood and race--"

Kevin: "And species."

Russell: "Well, certainly, in terms of wars, if you wanted to make that thesis, then you're saying that with respect to one's own race or one's own family that these are sources of violence ... and you may, *may*, be correct. But to expand that ... if one was able to expand that sense of self to include the whole of reality, ultimately - Nature as Reality - which is, if you like, the logical extension of including the natural world, then, in theory at least, there are no enemies, because we're connected to all of reality, and certainly all of the natural world."

Kevin: "Do you still think the feeling would be an emotional one, though? True, we do have an emotional feeling of protection and so on towards those people whom we love. We group together against an external enemy - the outside world. Communities join together against the forces of nature, to protect each other against change. So if we loved the *whole of reality* as our self, do you think

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

we'd still feel some kind of emotional feeling to protect it?"

Russell: "I think we're dealing here with ideals, and we're moving into the realm of philosophy. I think in the real world where you're dealing with people, where a vast number of people lead what we might call normal lives, it is unrealistic to talk about ideals. I think the reality is there will always be emotional reactions. Perhaps there might be the odd sage who mightn't respond emotionally--"

David: "What? You don't think it's realistic that we'll have five billion Buddhas sometime in the future?"

Russell: "Somewhat not realistic, no."

David: "But I wonder whether this idea about expanding the self out to include the biosphere actually does help promote the arising of Buddhas. A Buddha - a wise man or a wise woman - is someone who loves the whole infinity of Nature as oneself. And if you have that understanding of Reality, if you understand that Reality *is* your own self - then you'd have no emotional attachment as to whether the biosphere continued to exist or not. So if the biosphere were to be destroyed tomorrow - if a comet, say, hit the planet and caused all life to disappear - then, as far as the wise man is concerned, it's still all his own self, including the extinct planet and so forth. He makes no distinction between the biosphere and not-biosphere - in an emotional sense."

Russell: "I can see your point logically and speculatively, but certainly the aims of eco-psychology are far more humble in that they're certainly not aiming to create Buddhas, but rather to shift the culture, to whatever small degree, the "self understandings" of a majority of people in the West to be more sensitive and feel a deeper sense of connection to the natural environment. Clearly, the history of Western society, certainly since even the scientific revolution I suspect, has removed us from an emotional sense of attachment, sense of connection, a sense of wholeness and similarity with the natural environment. So I think it's still valid, even though it may not be pushing us towards sagehood."

Kevin: "The more we become aware and the more we become connected with Nature, the less and less we are going to be connected

with the people whom we traditionally have loved."

David: "That's right. Is it possible to love both a woman and the biosphere? Can we serve two masters?"

Kevin: "That's right, a woman's going to be mighty jealous! If you have an intense love of Nature, the girlfriend is not going to be too happy. She's going to feel jealous that perhaps you love Nature more than you love her."

Russell: "I think that's a very harsh judgment of a woman's love. It depends on how one defines it, but certainly the ideal of love that I would definitely hold, is that love is not jealous and discriminating and possessive. In a sense, the notions of love parallel this notion of expanding the sense of identity, and this has been made explicit by some thinkers in the field: that the attitude of love is to actually include other people in your identity, so that they are not separate, so there can be no jealousy."

Kevin: "Well, for example, Russell, you have a girlfriend - if you were to spend all of your time out in Nature, with other women ..."

Russell: [laughs]

Kevin: "... and no time with your girlfriend, obviously jealousy would arise in this scenario."

Russell: "Hmm ..."

Kevin: "So really, if we're truly going to extend ourselves out to encompass Nature, we can't become attached to individual people. We have to give our love, or give our understanding, equally to everybody on the planet. We have to relate to every woman on the planet equally, because every woman is an equal part of Nature."

David: "This is in a non-emotional sense. To me, the emotional intimacy between a man and a woman involves blocking out the rest of reality. The very pleasure of the intimacy between a man and a woman involves ignoring everything else."

Kevin: "It's a form of violence against the Universe."

David: "And this is totally incompatible with saving the biosphere."

Russell: "Yes, this is a very dark view, a very dark view of human relations, and certainly relations between the sexes. I mean, I hardly know where to begin."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "What did you think about David's starting comment there about how he believes we're entering a feminine fashion - we're going back to feminine or tribal values, where we value the community over the individual, where we value the community's values and ideas more than the individual's values and ideas? Do you think this is the way we should be going? Outwards towards the community?"

Russell: "To some degree I think that is the case. I think that part of the contemporary malaise - the 'quiet despair that the mass of men feel', to quote Thoreau - is a response to the patently obvious loss of community and loss of tradition that we experience all around us. I was reading statistics just recently where between 1920 and the 1970's the number of households that had six or more people in the house declined from forty percent to two or three percent in the whole Western world. And the number of households where there was only one person living increased from one or two percent to thirty-six percent or something--"

Kevin: "And you think we're having a reaction against that now, and we want more of these warm, large groups?"

Russell: "Yes. I think we want more a sense of connection with other people. And I think the breakdown, or the unsustainability, of relationships is another symptom of this. The nuclear family, the smallest sustainable biological unit that we've had in the history of the human race - and it's a new phenomenon - is itself becoming problematic, and we're breaking down into individual units. So yes, the regaining of community, the sense of connection with others, I see, and I think ecopsychologists see, as essential to the salvation of the whole biosphere."

Kevin: "I tell you what, I'll read out a short passage. This is from Otto Weininger and it's on the subject of woman and society and solitude, so this will give us some material to discuss."

'For woman the problem of solitude and society does not exist. She is well adapted for social relations (as, for instance, those of a companion or sick-nurse), simply because for her there is no transition from solitude to society. In the case of a man, the

choice between solitude and society is serious when it has to be made. The woman gives up no solitude when she nurses the sick, as she would have to do were she to deserve moral credit for her action; a woman is never in a condition of solitude, and knows neither the love of it nor the fear of it. The woman is always living in a condition of fusion with all the human beings she knows, even when she is alone; she is not an individual, for all individuals are sharply marked off from other existences. Women have no definite individual limits; they are not unlimited in the sense that geniuses have no limits, being one with the whole world; they are unlimited only in the sense that they are not marked off from the common stock of mankind.

'This sense of continuity with the rest of mankind is a sexual character of the female, and displays itself in the desire to touch, to be in contact with, the object of her pity; the mode in which her tenderness expresses itself is a kind of animal sense of contact. It shows the absence of the sharp line that separates one real personality from another. The woman does not respect the sorrow of her neighbour by silence; she tries to raise him from his grief by speech, feeling that she must be in physical, rather than spiritual, contact with him.

'This diffused life, one of the most fundamental qualities of the female nature, is the cause of the impressibility of all women, their unreserved and shameless readiness to shed tears on the most ordinary occasion. It is not without reason that we associate wailing with women, and think little of a man who sheds tears in public. A woman weeps with those that weep and laughs with those that laugh - unless she herself is the cause of the laughter - so that the greater part of female sympathy is ready-made.'

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

"So Weininger is making the point that women have a special quality in that they are *fused*, permanently fused, twenty-four hours a day, with the whole biosphere, with the whole of society. In a sense, they're already fully enlightened - subconsciously."

David: "In effect, they're perfect examples of what Russell is advocating."

Kevin: "Yes, is that what we're going towards? I mean, when I look at the new age culture I see this exact same female psychology that Weininger describes, where we *fuse*. Just look at the new age people: when they first see each other they run up and give each other a hug! They ask each other 'How are you?' - words, empty words. This is on the most crude physical level, an animal sort of a level. They believe, of course, that it's spiritual, but in fact it's the exact opposite because there's no rational or logical understanding there. What I'm worried about is that we're going in the direction *back* towards a primitive tribal type of culture, like the Australian aboriginal culture or the American Indians. We're going back to this tribal culture where there is no logical, rational connection with the world - it's more of a physical connection. For example, a clod of earth is definitely connected with the biosphere - it's connected physically - and in this sense tribal culture is connected, by force. It has no choice about the matter. It's just connected. But the genius, or the wise man, becomes connected *consciously* through his reason."

Russell: "Well, it's difficult to respond to. I think the stereotype you've described there does a terrible injustice to the nature of women's relating, and the nature of wisdom as seen from a female perspective. I can't speak on behalf of women, but my own feeling is that I certainly align myself with the view that our culture has been dreadfully masculinized, and that we need to regain exactly the sort of things that you were criticizing. I think that, like in all great lies, there's a certain substance of truth to part of what you were saying, and I think the core of it is that I think women do have a stronger sense of relationship. The sense of being connected is more important for women. To stereotype them and say they're fused, and to push it to the pole and say that women are fused and completely uncritical is, I think, a terrible injustice and just patently false."

David: "Well, aren't you describing *the feminine mind* there, Kevin?"

Kevin: "Yes, it's the feminine mind for sure, which too many men today have, I think. I wouldn't be so sexist as to say that anyone with a female body was actually feminine. That would be a terrible crime. Certainly, most men today have very feminine minds and cry and weep at the first occasion, and don't feel themselves to be individuals capable of thinking for themselves."

David: "So do you admit, Russell, the distinction between a sort of unconscious connection and a conscious one? I would say that a lot of indigenous cultures haven't got to the very bottom and reasoned out the true nature of things. Their connectedness has just evolved on an unconscious level, as a way of dealing with the environment, as opposed to developing a proper consciousness of Reality."

Russell: "There's a few things here. I disagree with that analysis as well. I mean, it's very hard for me, again, to be talking on behalf of indigenous people - they're well able to talk on behalf of themselves - but my own view is that there were always wise men of the tribe. And I presume there are always less wise men and women of the tribe, and also wise women of the tribe. And there were reasoning and rational people within the tribe as well. But I also would want to take issue with whether in fact this ethic of rationality is the only path to wisdom, and whether this preoccupation with and heightening of rationality is the only way to wisdom and truth. I don't think that that is the only path. There are other ways, and certainly indigenous people's ways - 'feeling' connections - rather than having an abstract, rational account of connections."

Kevin: "Well, that's a good subject to talk about, but first of all we'll just have a piece of music. This piece sounds as though it's by a community, and it's proof that, if nothing else, communities can produce harmony - it might not be wisdom, but it's harmony."

[MUSIC BREAK]

David: "Are there different paths to wisdom? Russell was saying before that rationality, which is what Kevin and I value, is not the only path to wisdom, that there are other paths. I presume he means feelings and intui-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

tions and that side of things. But to me 'wisdom' is just a word that we ourselves give meaning to, and I define the word 'wisdom' to mean the understanding of Ultimate Reality. It's a specific definition. And to understand Ultimate Reality one has to cast aside delusions about Reality, and one does that by reasoning, by trying to expose contradictions between ideas and so forth - by actually reasoning and seeing what is false, and then rejecting it. And when one does this perfectly one sees Ultimate Reality; one sees what is the real state of affairs of Nature. Now I ask, how can this be done by feelings? Feelings and intuitions have no meaning in relation to this goal."

Kevin: "Yes, couldn't we say that animals - I mean, animals other than ourselves: cows, for example - experience feelings of a sort? They certainly have feelings and they also have intuitions. So this kind of perception would seem to be of an earlier stage of evolution that comes *before* the kind of full consciousness that some human beings have. How can these feelings and intuitions lead to anything of real, concrete value?"

Russell: "Well, I think we have to back-pedal a little to your own definition of what wisdom is. And I think you've defined it in a way that privileges rational knowledge right from the beginning. And I just wonder whether being 'wise' might not simply be to have a particular philosophy about the nature of being, which is historically situated, which has a particular history and which will change. I mean, how one defines the nature of reality changes over time. So we know that those kind of discourses, those rational discourses about philosophy have a history. But I just wonder if being 'wise' might also actually involve a mode of being, rather than just a rational and particular state of consciousness. Whether being wise might involve a certain way of relating to people, a certain way of relating and responding to the natural environment, without even resorting to a rational method - without necessarily being able to speak using particular concepts to embody that way of relating. I am just reminded of Kierkegaard when he says that 'Truth is Subjectivity' - that the Truth is a mode of being, and that only God, or some sort of Absolute that stands outside of history, is able to determine what Absolute Truth

is. All that's left to human beings is to have a certain subjective stance."

Kevin: "Well, this is interesting. 'Truth is Subjectivity.' This relates to that piece I read out earlier by Weininger, where he was praising individuality as opposed to this kind of fuzzy community. The fuzzy community has ideas - it's like a self, if you like, but the individual, or the genius, the god-man, the true individual, is the highest being of all, and they are one hundred percent subjective in that it's just them and the world. All of their ideas are their own ideas; they're not other people's ideas. And their values are absolute for them. So what they believe is true is *absolutely true* - other peoples' ideas are irrelevant."

David: "But their ideas aren't arbitrary. You're not saying that they have the same sort of significance or value as an ordinary person's ideas?"

Kevin: "That's right. Subjective in that sense doesn't mean that the ideas are arbitrary; it means that they come from a true individual. And the individual is fully conscious that those ideas are his own, and that they have Ultimate Reality."

David: "I think we should remember that Kierkegaard was speaking against Hegel here, who was talking about this imaginary or speculative absolute - an intellectual absolute - with which Hegel did not involve himself on a personal level, whereas Kierkegaard valued the personal relationship with one's idea of Reality."

Kevin: "That's right. Hegel was going on about the balance between opposites and so on, and that somehow the Truth was in the middle of the opposites - and all of this gets rid of the individual and individual reasoning, which is what Kierkegaard valued above all."

Russell: "Well, I think that's true, but without that too, Kierkegaard, as the original existentialist, valued authentic being, a term which was coined by later existentialists, but it was Kierkegaard who actually said: 'Better to worship a false God rightly than the one true God wrongly.' And clearly what he's on about there is that what counts for the individual is the--"

Kevin: "Consistency."

Russell: "Or the integrity. One's particular subjective relationship with the views one has of the world."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

David: "But even better is to have a relationship with true ideas!"

Russell: "Well, the whole notion of true ideas is fundamentally criticized by Kierkegaard. In his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, he's really tackling a view of the world which says there are objective, enduring, unquestionable, rational truths out there. There is only existential truth. There is only a truth that's truth for me."

David: "Yes, but that particular book was written by a pseudonym, so it may not even be Kierkegaard's view there."

Kevin: "And Kierkegaard certainly believed that his philosophy was ultimately true for all time."

David: "Yes, to which he gave the name 'God'."

Kevin: "He gives the name 'God' to the Absolute, Ultimate Truth, which only the individual can arrive at."

David: "And which is neither subjective nor objective. You can't categorize God in either of those two categories. So when Kierkegaard was speaking against objectivity he was just speaking against people's attachments to objectivity. But he wasn't saying that 'therefore nobody can understand the Truth'. He was just trying to get rid of people's attachments to certain concepts, for the sake of this higher Truth which he knew about. And so I wonder, how do feelings and the feminine values lead one to this Ultimate Truth?"

Kevin: "Continuing on from what we were saying before, it's better to worship a false God consistently than nothing at all. But the society we have today is totally nihilistic, in the sense that people's ideas are changing from day to day. They don't claim to know anything. I mean, we've spoken to a number of experts on this program - professors and so on - who don't claim to know anything. This makes doing the program rather difficult. It would be better if they claimed to know something so we could argue with them. But when people don't claim to know anything, and they claim that there is no Truth, for individuals, or for communities ..."

David: "Well, I must say they *are* consistent to the idea that they don't know anything ... and I agree with them!"

Kevin: "Yes, they're consistent in the sense that the earth is consistent. The ground is

consistently ground. But that's not the kind of consistency that we should praise. We should praise consistency of consciousness, consistency of coherency of philosophy."

Russell: "Some of what you're saying appeals to me in that it's a critique of the post-modern consciousness which is preoccupied with deconstructing everything around it."

Kevin: "Except itself."

Russell: "Often except itself, although occasionally there are postmodern deconstructionists who deconstruct their own thinking. And I think that's right and proper. To be relativising all of knowing and being out of existence is a terrible thing, and it's part of the alienation that we experience - that there is nothing to hang our hats on, nothing that we can know with any assurance. Surely, this is part of the epistemology that underlies recent thinking in psychology."

Kevin: "If we're going to value Nature, though, we want to be consistent. So if we're going to love Nature then we should go *the whole way*. We should love Nature, full stop. Nature is the only lover that every man should have."

Russell: "When you say 'love Nature' ... I'm just interested whether you have an emotional response to Nature?"

Kevin: "No, it's more understanding and experiential. So when we understand Nature and feel our place in it, and see ourselves out there in Nature, then at that moment, if we have faith in our own reasoning, we experience that oneness with Nature. When this happens, no other kind of love or interest is possible. It's impossible to emotionally love a human being when you're in love with Nature. You can't do both at the same time."

Russell: "I'm interested in your comment there - your 'feeling' for Nature and your 'experience' of Nature. For me, they're the core issues - not whether one can have a particular abstract and rational view of one's relationship to Nature. But whether one does in fact feel and experience some connection with Nature."

David: "Both those things can only be done rationally. I don't think Kevin was talking about some sort of abstract, conceptual connection with Nature, but actually the *complete opposite*. It's a casting away of all the conceptual barriers between oneself and Reality. So the only way one can be fully

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

connected with Reality is to get rid of all barriers."

Kevin: "Reason itself destroys all the barriers between us and the rest of Nature, if we're properly rational."

Russell: "But to understand you correctly, though, the end point is still a feeling and an experience of connectedness."

Kevin: "Yes, if you go *the whole way*. But what's happened in the past is that we've gone through a period of masculine rationality - so called - where there's great advances in science and technology, but people haven't taken their reasoning *the whole way*. They've gone the first step, they've gone one centimetre out of a thousand kilometers and said, 'Hmm, well this doesn't look like it's taking us very far. We've got to a dead-end; we've reached a brick wall; we can't go any further, so let's go back to where we've just come from'. It's like we've just been born: we've become little babies in the cradle; we've started to use science and reasoning and we've developed philosophy, and then we've said "Hang on, this is too difficult. I want to jump back into my mother's womb and become one with the earth again." We're afraid of our own consciousness! We're afraid of being real individuals in this cold hard world where we're faced with the prospect of having to work things out for ourselves."

Russell: "On that point I see eco-psychology, the perspective that I'm interested in, as being profoundly post-industrial, and profoundly post-technological, post-scientific, and that the way forward is not a yearning after the old ways. But we certainly have to incorporate and use the thinking and the scientific achievements and those natural abilities that I think are connected with being human, and developing them, but under a wholly different ethic - within an ethic that values the connection and the sense of identification with the natural environment. Yes, so I'm critical of this uncritical identification with indigenous cultures. I think there's a lot of misconceptions about indigenous cultures, and a sense of throwing the baby out with the bathwater in terms of the Western tradition - I think it would be wrong, and it simply won't work. It would be wrong-minded to attempt to jettison the good things in the peculiarly Western tradition."

Kevin: "Well, I question whether there is any wisdom in the old tribal cultures at all. I mean, you mentioned before that a lot of tribes had their wise men, but, my word, they can't have been very wise, because all of these cultures, as of this day, have just about been completely wiped out. I recently visited Ladakh in Northern India, where they have a very old, traditional Tibetan culture which new age people praise to the skies. But the culture can't protect itself. The West has got in there, invited in by the culture, and has run rampant, by the will of the very inhabitants themselves. And their culture is basically now completely wiped out. I mean, if there was wisdom in their culture to begin with, this wouldn't have happened. And in fact I see that our own culture, our own Western culture, has come out of those ancient tribal cultures. It's like the tribal culture is the juvenile stage of a life-cycle, and we are at the puberty stage, with all of our sex and feminism and so on. We haven't reached the adult stage, but we want to go back to infancy again."

Russell: "I should just challenge that view of the world. I mean, that to me sounds just like manifest destiny - you know, the sort of philosophy that justified white America over-running the Indian populations, and certainly the colonization of Australia. And I think it's way off-track. I think that this view of the world, where there is no such thing as injustice, where there's no such thing as tragedy pure and simple, where there's no such thing as power relations and tyranny; this view of the world where something is inferior because it's been beaten--"

Kevin: "I'm not saying that. It was beaten because there was no true wisdom there. If there was true wisdom in a culture, it would continue to survive in some way."

David: "Yes, because the very essence of wisdom is adaptability - being able to adapt to situations as they arise."

Russell: "There's two points there. I would reiterate again that I'd like to disagree with that view of the world that wisdom can't be destroyed--"

David: "That's true. If a tribe is going to get wiped out by a machine-gun or a bomb then it doesn't matter how wise the tribe is, it'll still get wiped out."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Russell: "The other side of it is that I think indigenous cultures do remain, and indigenous wisdom is still there alive and well, certainly in Australia."

David: "Do you think it's possible that the culture can be wise?"

Kevin: "It's always possible that a few individuals can have some wisdom."

David: "Well, I don't know. Is it possible that an indigenous person, an aboriginal, can be wise, given their culture? We ourselves used to be in tribes thousands of years ago. Now if you're living in a tribe and you start thinking about what is real, and you start to value reason, then pretty soon you'll be at odds with everybody within that tribe. And if you're going to be consistent to this truth that you're uncovering, you'll have to be attacking other people's false concepts - their attachments to one another, their attachments to life - and I can't see how such a person can do this and yet stay within the tribe. I mean, the tribe is just going to say, 'Sorry buddy, if you don't want to be here, get lost!'"

Russell: "Again, I would have to take issue with your notion of what wisdom is. And to me it's a peculiarly Western and rational notion of what wisdom is. If I could just contrast that ... if I think in my own stereotypes of aboriginal wisdom, which may or may not be true, but to me the notion of a wise aboriginal man or woman, perhaps a healer, is someone who senses and feels and believes their sense of connection with everything around them. Everything. All the landscape. All the human beings. The sky. Everything has spiritual significance. There are no objects out there that have no spiritual significance. They are not just landscape or just trees as they are to us now, but they're actually part of a whole sense of the spirituality of everything. This to me is wise."

Kevin: "I would describe a wise person as someone who speaks the Truth. So if a person claims that they have an intimate connection with the whole of Nature, and that they feel one with the whole of Nature, and yet they don't speak the truth ... ! I mean dangerous truths, truths that people don't want to hear, but which they *should* hear, of which there are many. There are very few people today speaking those truths. And these so called people who claim to be wise, and yet they don't speak the truth ... it's a proof that they're

not wise. I live in a kind of tribal culture up at Maleny, actually, and they definitely don't appreciate people speaking the truth up there. And this would be the case in any tribe."

David: "Well, that's easily countered, though. We could define wisdom as a type of harmony. You know, fostering harmony within the group - that would be a type of wisdom."

Kevin: "Yes, it all depends how we define the word."

David: "Yes, so what you're saying there, Russell, about seeing the spiritual element in everything, I would say that it's something imagined. It's part of the imagination of the person. He's projecting a conceptual idea of spirituality onto the environment around him. This is completely removed from the understanding of Reality which we speak of - this direct understanding which is beyond concepts, if you like. Would you agree that there's a great distinction there?"

Russell: "I'd see the ideal of the aboriginal man or woman, in that state of consciousness, as the logical fulfillment of your own philosophies. The path to it may not have been following the particular ideas of perennial philosophy that you may espouse, but the outcome is a man or woman who has a profound knowledge and sense of the interconnectedness of things, and they would speak the wisdom that would flow from that sort of consciousness. And I suspect, like in any other culture in the world, there were prophets in the history of indigenous tribes who spoke hard truths to their own people. For example, in the indigenous tribes of the Jewish faith in the Old Testament, you had prophets speaking hard truths to their own people. So I would see those wise men and women of indigenous tribes as really the fulfillment of your own philosophy - but taking a different path there, perhaps."

David: "Well, since both Kevin and I value rational analysis, and getting to the bottom of how things exist, even questioning whether things have real existence, I don't see how this has any connection with projecting, or 'seeing', a spiritual element in everything around us. It's completely different because this person who believes in the spiritual element is still bound by delusions concerning existence. He hasn't gone to the very core of existence. It's completely different."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "And also you wonder what their purpose is. I mean, if their purpose is to simply heal individual people, this is a very narrow purpose. Any wise man has as his purpose the grandest of all purposes, which is the survival of wisdom. And this is why I say that a wise man is someone who speaks the Truth. It's the greatest gift. Better than giving someone's sight back, better than helping them to walk again, is to actually help them to become wise. And how many of these tribal elders and 'wise men' actually speak the Truth and make people wise? There's no-one."

Russell: "Without wanting to sound too harsh, I think it's a terrible conceit to think that only this particularly verbal and intellectual culture that has developed in the West has access to wisdom."

David: "Ah, no. Who in the West are you referring to? Does the wisdom that Kevin and I speak about have any connection at all with Western society?"

Russell: "Absolutely!"

David: "Maybe *two* individuals in all of Western history! Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, perhaps, maybe Weininger, are on a par with us. But in regards to all the stuff taught in the Universities, and the basic world view of Western Society generally, we have absolutely *no relationship whatsoever* to it. We repudiate all of it."

Kevin: "But, in fact, we do go along totally with the teachings of Lao Tzu, for example, in the *Tao Te Ching*, and also the teachings of the Buddha and the Zen Master Hakuin. In fact, all of the wise men, whether they be from the East or West, have exactly the same teaching, and it's based on reason. They have all come to the end of reasoning, where reason has in fact undermined itself. So Truth is at the *end* of reasoning, but not before you've come to the end of it. It is only then one can enter the Infinite. And here's an interesting quote from Taoism - the word 'Tao' you can replace with the word "wisdom", if you like":

When the Tao was lost its characteristics appeared.

When its characteristics were lost benevolence appeared.

When benevolence was lost righteousness appeared.

When righteousness was lost ceremonies appeared.

Ceremonies are but the unsubstantial flowers of the Tao.

And the commencement of disorder.

"So it's like saying that the more community minded we become - you know, let's have a ritual where we all get together in the village square and dance around to Irish jigs and do a couple of Buddhist pujas for good measure - this is the commencement of disorder. It's the farthest remove you can possibly go away from the Tao."

David: "Whereas 'righteousness' is attachment to being an individual, attachment to being arrogant, and even *that* is a far remove from wisdom."

Kevin: "Even though righteousness a higher step than where our society is today, which is on this crude tribal level of just dancing around fires."

David: "Yes, I would characterize Western society as a type of tribal culture. It has its own dreamtime and its own myths. The worship of women is the big myth of our times. It is equivalent to dreamtime. So what Kevin and I are on about is infinitely removed from this reality. We value going to the very roots of existence, and there's not many people like that."

Russell: "To me, coming from a psychological perspective, what I hear there - and I know this sounds very postmodern - but I hear a discourse from both of you - that is, a particular way of talking about the world and your place in it that may or may not be more or less profound than other people. And I think that no-one can ultimately make a judgment on that view. We can choose to make judgments, but no one will know ..."

David: "Why not?"

Russell: "No one will know because of the nature of knowledge claims. You know, we're only speaking language. I suppose I'm making the point that - you're right, there are all sorts of cultures - but I would make the point that what you're saying is also one of them. It's a particular discourse, a particular culture-"

David: "A particular *wise* culture."

Russell: "Yes, you might call it wisdom and use words which conclude that. And you have a particular rhetoric and a particular way

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

of defending that. But certainly there are a myriad of others. Certainly, the feminist voice is one--"

Kevin: "Do you concede that it's possible for a human being to come to a perfect understanding of Ultimate Reality, the One, Permanent, Infinite, Reality? Do you believe it's possible for people to do that? I'm thinking of people like the Buddha who claimed to know this one and only Truth ... or Jesus."

Russell: "They may believe they have this understanding, but whether they so-called objectively do or not is something that will remain forever unknown."

Kevin: "But do you think it's possible to know the one Truth?"

David: "Or was the Buddha fooling himself?"

Russell: "I think the Buddha only had language. I think he had some wonderful insights that were very helpful and creative, probably for many humans. But I suspect also that there are other ways to Buddhahood."

Kevin: "Are you saying that you don't think it's possible for a person to come to this one Truth?"

Russell: "I think it's possible to come to a subjective sense of the Truth--"

David: "You're saying that it's possible to come to some idea of Truth, but one can't ascertain for sure whether this idea is true."

Russell: "Yes, I'd hold that."

David: "And why do you think this?"

Russell: "Because of the nature of knowledge claims. This is the postmodern epistemology: that we only have language, and that all knowledge, all ways of thinking, are products of our time and history."

David: "But are you certain of this? Are you certain that we only have knowledge claims? And are you certain that we can only ever be uncertain all the time?"

Kevin: "And are you certain that we are limited by language constructs? Or are these just theories of postmodernism?"

Russell: "I think I'd hold them at the same critical distance as anything else. They're merely theories. We only ever have theories."

David: "'We can only ever have theories' - are you certain of that one?"

Russell: "No, I'm not certain."

Kevin: "It's a theory."

Russell: "In compliance with my own view of the world, my own epistemology, then we

can never know with certainty. We can have a subjective sense of certainty, but outside of that we can't."

Kevin: "Are you certain of this?"

Russell: "No. I can never be certain."

David: "You can *never* be certain?"

Russell: "That's correct."

David: "Are you certain of that?"

Russell: "No, I can't be certain of this."

David: "Why? Why are you not certain of this? This is what interests me, actually. Is it just some kind of arbitrary idea that comes into your head?"

Russell: "No, because I have a sense of the radically historical nature of all knowing and being - this is the historicist argument that there can be no words and no language that's not socially constituted. And that means that the very essence of a truth claim is constituted by social relationships."

Kevin: "Well, you see, all words and all concepts refer to *things*, don't they. They refer to things in the world. So we project these boundaries out onto Nature, and we cut Nature up into lots of little pieces, and then we have words for all these little pieces, and then we join them all together with our philosophies and so on. But the totality, which includes all of these little pieces, goes beyond concepts in a sense, in that it's not a thing. The totality includes the observer; it includes the mind that's observing; it's infinite. So we're talking about this Infinite Truth. It's not the same as all these other things that we've cut into pieces and spliced up, and yet we can still give it a name. We can call it 'God' or we can call it the 'Infinite'. And yet if the person who is using the word knows what he's talking about, if he feels and understands this "Infinite", well then, he's not limited by language, you see. He can cut the world up however he likes, because he knows that Reality is Infinite. He can use words however he likes. He can draw boundaries wherever he wants to. He's totally free, and he is totally free in language. That's why people all over the world have different languages, and yet they've all arrived at the same wisdom of Ultimate Reality. The Taoists call it the Tao, the Buddhists call it Emptiness or Sunyata, a Christian might call it God, David and I call it the Infinite. So even though we all have different languages we all arrive at the same Truth. Or at least wise men do."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "And a wise man is not subject to concerns about certainty and uncertainty. Because he is actually not attached to anything at all, the whole idea of certainty and uncertainty is meaningless to him. He has transcended."

Russell: "Much of what you say appeals to me. I would just question the value you place on that sort of discourse. Perhaps there are other ways of being."

David: "That's right. We just value it. We value it because Nature has made us value it. We consider it important."

Kevin: "Actually, I'm just going to read one final little piece before we finish off here. Another piece from Weininger; and it goes like this":

'Genius is the highest morality, and, therefore, it is every one's duty. Genius is to be attained by a supreme act of the will, in which the whole universe is affirmed in the individual. Genius is something which "men of genius" take upon themselves; it is the greatest exertion and the greatest pride, the greatest misery and the greatest ecstasy to a man. A man may become a genius if he wishes to.'

David: "Well, that was ... profound. Thanks Russell, and Kevin and I will be back next week. See you."⁶³

THE NEW AGE

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -
Copyright (c) 1995 Kevin Solway & David Quinn
29th October, 1995

Guest: Zachary Ziamus

Hosts: Kevin Solway & David Quinn

Kevin: "I'm Kevin Solway, with me is David Quinn, and this is the only *Hour of Judgment*. Our listeners will know by now that both David and I claim to have a perfect understanding of Ultimate Reality. And aside from the two of us, we live in an age of deep darkness where there's barely even a glimmer of light to be found anywhere. Certainly, very few people today believe there is such a thing as Truth, let alone venture to understand it or, even further, to teach it. So you can imagine our surprise when we came upon a sign right in the centre of Brisbane city, which said in large bold letters 'ULTIMATE WISDOM: A Course of Enlightenment - based upon not religion, not dogma, not fallacy, but TRUTH.' Reading a little further revealed that if you want to know what it is, where it is, when it is, how it is, and why it is, then *behold*, 'Zachary Ziamus presents TRUTH'. Apparently, he'll be giving teachings here in Brisbane shortly in which he aims to reveal all the answers to the nature of the Universe, the reason for existence, the meaning of life, and the source of love and freedom. And as if that wasn't enough he'll also be giving a course of teachings on the psychic arts, the magical methods of mysticism, the secrets of the tarot, and how to see auras. Well, David and I thought we'll have to try and get this fellow on the program for our listeners, and I'm glad to say that Zachary Ziamus is sitting right here in the studio with us tonight. Now Zachary, the claim to understand Ultimate Truth is a very big claim. I'm sure you're aware of that. So the first question I'm going to ask you is: How do you justify making this claim, and what is your conception of Ultimate Truth?"

Zachary: "Okay. Why I justify making the claim that I know the Absolute Truth ... it's difficult to justify how you come to a point of knowing that things are this way without a doubt. It's largely intuitive, a gradual process,

and you can't really see the very beginning of where it all comes out of. But it's more of an intuitive, inexplicable certainty that has arisen out of many experiences which has given me a deep understanding and insight through watching and observing the world as it is. Now, my conception of Truth ..."

Kevin: "Yes."

Zachary: "I have four major aspects, or principles, when I look at Truth. The first is that "all is energy", and that's part of the physical plane. Now I go onto the mental plane and I say that 'thought is reality'. Third point is the emotional plane where I say that 'like attracts alike'. And fourth with the spiritual plane where I say that 'understanding is evolution'. And of course it goes deeper than this with my explanations of why I have come to those four truths."

Kevin: "'Understanding is evolution' - can you expand on that one a little bit?"

Zachary: "Well, I see that knowledge is not the be all and end all. Knowledge will only lead you into delusion, as I suppose the Buddha would agree, and a lot of Eastern schools of thought would support. But it is the understanding which stems from experience that gives you the real unfolding."

Kevin: "So you're saying that knowledge is like a stepping- stone to somewhere further, to somewhere deeper."

Zachary: "Yes. If you want to simplify it, I see knowledge in a negative sense and understanding in a positive sense. Understanding is deep-rooted and has nothing to do with the mind, but is something which dwells within. And it builds to the foundation that you exist on as you go through each and every day. Knowledge, on the other hand, is just fleeting - the more you know the more you're deluded, usually. So I don't claim to know the Truth, I claim to understand the Truth."

Kevin: "Right, and this is what you think qualifies you to make these claims of being a teacher of Ultimate Truth?"

Zachary: "Yes."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "Do you see yourself as being on the same plane as the Buddha and the other great religious teachers? Do you think your wisdom is the same as their wisdom?"

Zachary: It has striking similarities. Throughout all my work I see elements of all religions and institutions of thought coming from all different parts of the world. But I don't see myself as comparable to the Buddha. I've not met the Buddha, so I wouldn't know the reality of whether he was truly an amazing person, or whether it's just been exaggerated.

David: Well, what about your conception of the perfect person? We can give this person the name "Buddha" - I assume you think that such a person is possible?

Zachary: Yes.

David: "So I'd like to get down to this difference between knowing and understanding, as you put it. I'm not quite sure what you mean. What's the difference?"

Zachary: "Okay, I'll go further. I see that knowledge is a transitory thing. Often you come to know things, and you may believe them, you may be absolutely certain, but then further down the track you may see them to be incorrect. So knowledge is not solid."

David: "Yes, but what about the enlightenment of the Buddha? Is that a form of knowledge? The Buddha claimed to have understood timeless principles, like cause and effect."

Zachary: "But in his expression he must have converted it to a knowledge for it to be transported to other people. To try to transfer understanding is like trying to rip out an energy inside your stomach and giving it to another person inside their stomach, or their holistic being - not their mind, not their intellectual processes, not their justifications. But the Buddhist system, or philosophy, is his knowledge, his way of compacting his understanding into a workable form. Of course, this is just my opinion."

David: "Is the Buddha's understanding conceptual? This 'beyond knowledge' type of understanding - is it still in the conceptual realm? Or does he have an infinite consciousness, something of that nature?"

Zachary: "I think that enlightenment doesn't really come in a visual or conceptual form or anything to do with a two-dimensional or three-dimensional thing. I

think it comes more from a spiritual sensation, an opening up, beyond words explanation and expression."

Kevin: "Well, let's have a look at how such a spiritual person would actually live. Through the way they live we can come to some understanding of what their knowledge is and what their mind is like. Now, in the Buddhist ideal, the Buddha is entirely without attachment - emotional attachment."

Zachary: "Yes."

Kevin: "So Buddhas don't have the desires which ordinary people have - the desire to be loved, for example, the desire for warmth and caring and all these things. Does this fit-in with your particular goal? Do you wish to become free of all emotional attachments?"

Zachary: "Absolutely not. I see attachment, evil, desire, suffering, as all necessary and inclusive parts of existence. It is the dichotomies of living, the contradictions, the good, the bad, the ups and downs, the in and outs--"

David: "So a perfect person would have attachments in your view?"

Zachary: "Well, if they suppressed and denied and fled from all attachment, are they not living unnaturally? Because to say that such a person is living naturally and we are living unnaturally--"

David: "Compared to the ordinary egotist the perfect person *would* be living unnaturally, because he would be living without ego, the source of all attachment. The source of all attachment is the ego - preserving the self."

Zachary: "True."

David: "So it seems perfectly clear to me that a perfect person, a Buddha, because he has no self he has no attachments. He can never, ever experience emotion."

Kevin: "A wise person would never suppress or deny emotions. A wise person simply wouldn't experience them because they have no ignorance - they've escaped the basis for those emotions to arise. And the basis is, of course, the ego, or the concept of the self. So do you agree with this idea that if you go beyond the self then there's no basis upon which these emotions can grow?"

Zachary: "True. But looking at the fact that we live in a material existence, then material desires, material interaction and material life is what the Buddha must have lived. He must have had innate needs, wheth-

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

er he desired those need or not. But let's say that attachments to certain things seem not really--"

Kevin: "Let's make a distinction here between, say, the desire for food - you know, when a person becomes hungry they get a certain sensation in their stomach and they feel hungry. So this is not what I mean by an emotion. Food is a biological need. Similarly with pain: if you touch some fire you feel some sensation, and that sensation is telling you to pull your hand away pretty quick smart otherwise it gets burnt - this is necessary for our survival as a species. But *emotional desire* is something more; it's something that is created by the mind. And I would say that they are not innately born into us; it's something which can be escaped."

Zachary: "Okay, one way I may be able to express what I think about attachment and rising above such things ... I believe they're necessary and important parts of life because I think it is wrong to insulate yourself from any element of what exists and what has come about. It is wrong to insulate yourself from facts, realities, the Truth within you. If a person wants to become enlightened, it's a little bit difficult to contrive the whole process and become free of all this desire. So take desire out to its end. If you get to that point of the Buddha, then so be it. But up until that stage--"

Kevin: "Right, but what we're talking about here is our conception of the perfect person, the perfect spiritual person. Are you saying that this perfect person, who has got rid of his self, the false concept of the self, are you saying that this person would also have anger and violence in him, which comes from emotional desires and attachment? Or is he beyond all of those things?"

Zachary: "Beyond all those things."

Kevin: "Ah, so he doesn't feel emotion."

Zachary: "No. But the process, the means to that end, to that point ... you certainly have to go through the nasties."

Kevin: "Yes, until a person becomes absolutely perfect they do experience emotions and ordinary human love."

Zachary: "True, and that's the experience that grants you the understanding to synthesize the polarities and the contradictories into a state where you become resolved. And

instead of being amongst the flux that exists around us, you exist outside of it."

Kevin: "Yes, it's interesting, though, when I scan through the realms of New Age books which are on the shelves these days, you don't find much discussion on this idea of going beyond the emotions. You know, everybody wants to be loved, so it's very rare that you'll find a New Age book which tells you that this is the place to go, a place which is beyond love, a place where you will never experience love for another human being - love in the ordinary human sense - and other people will find it very difficult to love you, and even if they could, you would have no appreciation for it anyway."

David: "It wouldn't sell very many books, would it, Kevin?"

Kevin: "It certainly wouldn't sell very many books, and it wouldn't sell many courses."

Zachary: "No."

Kevin: "So is this why people don't do it? Why do you think?"

Zachary: "I think that when people are writing a book they're doing it within the scope of this world. And this world has a lot of problems to do with relationships, love, and attachment. So to talk about the ideal state may be going too far for the average person. A little bit too idealistic."

Kevin: "You were saying before how we can learn through living an emotional life. Okay, we're emotional to begin with, we're egotistical and selfish and so on, we don't have any knowledge of Ultimate Reality, so we're stuck with these emotions - for now, anyway. So you're saying that through ploughing into these things which we're attached to, and experiencing the pain that comes through them, we learn--"

Zachary: "Yes, it'll give you the leverage."

Kevin: "It's the ripening of our karma."

Zachary: "You can hardly expect a realization to come without the potency of a lived rapport with these things. You cannot realize the source of evil, or pain, or anything negative, if you've never experienced it, and experienced it profoundly. I mean, you've got to go through the tunnel of darkness to get to the light. To expect to go straight to the light without going through the darkness would be, I think, naive."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "Fair enough. But I'd like to couch what we've just been saying in slightly different terms, because you're assuming that this perfect state is some sort of otherworldly, lofty state that has nothing to do with our present reality--"

Zachary: "I believe you can reach the Ultimate Reality in a transcended state within this life."

David: "Yes, but I'd like to get it back down to earth and just call it truth. The goal is to have a perfectly truthful mind - it's what I call being sane--"

Zachary: "True."

David: "Being truthful simply means trying to eliminate all the false concepts of things. So if to be truthful is to encourage people to give-up attachments, to go beyond love, then that's what we should be doing, shouldn't it? I mean, otherwise, you're just feeding people lies."

Zachary: "I don't particularly want to intrude on people's lives, or push anything, as this would interfere with their natural progression of learning. It doesn't matter how many times you pass on some wisdom to a person, it doesn't mean they are going to absorb this wisdom and really understand it until they've gone through it, and then you may be able to link with it."

David: "Even so, we can't escape influencing people. We're doing it all the time. Whoever we meet - we're influencing people."

Kevin: "We can certainly act as a catalyst to make them reach that hell, and to make them confront that evil more quickly than they otherwise would."

Zachary: "Definitely - as long as they come to you. But if you go to them and start bashing them over the head with your guidance ..."

David: "That's right. It just comes down to 'skill in means', as they say in Buddhism. But as Kevin said in the introduction, we're living in a very dark age - a completely ignorant one. And the major reason for this is that nobody is articulating and making visible the actual goal of perfection. The goal of perfection is just laughed at nowadays."

Zachary: "I don't truly support the theory that we're living in a dark age at all. I think everything's perfect as it is. And to set up even the concept of perfection and a goal for people may mislead the whole process. Be-

cause if they go and run away from civilization into the seclusion of a cave, how are they ever going to go through the dynamics of experience that will lead to their realizations of understanding that would evolve them into becoming more enlightened and more in touch with the Truth?"

Kevin: "I think we'd have to say that it's a special kind of person who can learn something constructive from their experiences. Right at this minute there's a lot of people out there in the world having all kinds of intense experiences of life. You only have to turn on the TV for an intense experience of life. With all the violence and sex, it's like all the evil of the world is crystallized into what you see on your television screen, and what you hear in modern pop music, and even what you read in popular books. So there's certainly a lot of experience out there, but nobody, or virtually nobody, is learning anything from it. So something is lacking. Some element is lacking."

Zachary: "I think people may be learning from it, but they don't necessarily display it or show it or express it to other people."

David: "Why not?"

Zachary: "Why not?"

David: "Yes, why wouldn't they?"

Zachary: "Social lubrication. To fit-in with their identity, as given by their society and their times. If you get on a one-on-one situation with a person, often the philosophical understandings will come out. When you're in a situation of ten people, it would rarely come out."

David: "And it's a bad thing to be compromised in this way. It would be better if there were more people who were more uncompromising and stood up for their ideals, wouldn't it?"

Zachary: "Not necessarily, because the social masks which people wear assist the whole process of us observing ourselves and the way that we change. It shows us the cracks in our personas, in our nature that we're not displaying. If we never had that false part of our life, we would never know and want the truth."

Kevin: "I find it interesting, though, that we're supposed to be living in this Age of Aquarius, which is supposed to be an age of awakening and an age of spirituality and forward thinking and so on, but when you

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

look at people's interests, despite all the experience that they've had ... and even when you look at young people today, a person of the age of fourteen or fifteen - they've had sexual experiences, they've had experiences with drugs, their parents have split up - twice - they've experienced the totality of life. They're probably working and paying tax! So there's no shortage of these learning experiences. But when you look at what people are interested in ... If they *had* learned something through all those experiences, they would be interested in a) discovering Truth - what is actually true and what is false - and b) they'd want to make their lives mirror that Truth. They'd want permanence. They'd want the permanence of Truth, because Truth is the only truly permanent thing there is. Everything else is going to disappear. But in my experience I've only met probably a handful of people who have even thought about the idea of the existence of Truth, or the value of Truth. Certainly, people don't go out studying Ultimate Reality and planning their lives so that by the time they're thirty they will be completely beyond the need for any emotional attachments. This is what people *should* be doing and *would* be doing if they were learning something. But if, as is the case today, people aren't learning *anything* then, of course, nobody plans their life around this. There's no University courses in how to become enlightened. There's no school courses in how to plan your life to become an enlightened being."

Zachary: "Yes, it seems most people don't go after the Absolute Truth because many believe that it is not possible, that it can't be done, that the paradoxical utilities which the Universe displays are unresolvable by the human mind and the limited comprehension of our understanding. I think that this is the main reason why there's no great facilities, institutions, massive movements within the people to get right to the bottom of these things."

David: "And that's because everybody's compromising, isn't it?"

Kevin: "What do you think, Zachary, about this modern idea, which is so common these days, that there is no Truth, that we can't know any truth for certain, and so therefore everything is of equal value?"

David: "This is a very popular one! About ninety percent of our guests on the program think this!"

Kevin: "Yes, they think that everything is of equal validity, that if someone believes something then that's equally as true as what anybody else believes in, that all lifestyles are equally valid. So if I say, for example, that desiring Truth is a good thing, and somebody else says that desiring ignorance is a good thing, then these are equally valid lifestyles. What do you say to that? This is a common New Age idea, actually."

Zachary: "I believe that they're both valid lifestyles."

Kevin: "Do they have equal value to *you*, though?"

Zachary: "Absolutely. I've come to a point in my understanding of Truth where the fool is just as truthful as the wise man. The wise man will die a fool; the enlightened one will laugh, giggle, act like a child, be ignorant of things, choose not to involve themselves in serious pursuits."

Kevin: "Yes, but I'm talking about *real* ignorance now, ignorance of anything truthful - ignorance in the form of extreme violence and anger and close-mindedness - that kind of ignorance."

Zachary: "Well, they're of no worse state than an enlightened person."

David: "What about a child molester?"

Zachary: "Is their experience going to be any worse?"

David: "Is a child molester less valid? Is a child molester more ignorant than a Buddha?"

Kevin: "Nobody's blaming these people. If a person is ignorant, obviously there are reasons why a person is ignorant - they've been brought-up that way. Given the world we live in, we can't blame people for being ignorant and foolish. So no one is saying that they're 'bad' in an emotional way; but values are necessary in life if we are ever going to achieve anything."

David: "Well, you can definitely say that child molesting is *different* to being a Buddha. They're different. That's the first point to actually understand - they're actually different activities."

Kevin: "They are different, yes, and this is something a lot of people would not accept."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Zachary: "But I'm not really interested in saying which one is more valid. I think the real question is: what is the Truth? Is it better or good to be molesting people, or is it better to be enlightening others and being enlightened yourself."

David: "Precisely."

Kevin: "So you're making a value judgment here."

Zachary: "Yes, and I say that they're equal. There is a certain homogeneity of existence. To say that the Buddha would put himself above the most ignorant man who exists ... I don't think that he would."

Kevin: "Well, certainly not on an emotional level. But for purposes of language, and for purposes of achieving his goal - which is to spread wisdom everywhere - just for purposes of language, you say that wisdom is better than ignorance."

David: "More than that, it comes down to being an *existing individual*, as Kierkegaard might put it, rather than leading a nonsense life. I mean, if you're going to have contradictions in your life ... if you're going to be an anti-pornographic campaigner, and you want to get rid of all pornography in the world, and in your private life you've got pornographic videos and pictures of naked girls all over your room, then you're leading a nonsense life, aren't you? So if you want to be a Buddha, if you want to help wisdom in the world, then you must make distinctions and judgments about what is good behaviour and what is bad behaviour in relation to this goal."

Zachary: "Yes, I see your point, but I believe it's difficult to eradicate all contradictions. We're all contradictory to some degree. Do we practice what we preach?"

David: "Even a Buddha? Even a perfect person ... ?"

Zachary: "The perfect person ... I mean, it's all hearsay. If we had an enlightened person of our own times, how are we going to know for certain that they are enlightened? And if so, will their actions necessarily coexist with their perfection?"

David: "Well, because he has no self he can't have any contradictions - as he doesn't really exist."

Kevin: "Well, we're going to have a short piece of music now - very short - it lasts for about one minute and fifty seconds. And

when we come back we'll talk about life and death. That's a pretty good subject."

[MUSIC BREAK]

Kevin: "Zachary, what do you think about 'life'? Do we have some kind of a soul in us? Do you equate the soul with our consciousness, or what? What happens at death?"

Zachary: "At death, I believe it would be largely like sleep. Life is full of death and rebirth, a whole process of death and rebirth, and at the point at which our physical body comes to the end, I believe there'll be some nut within the shell which will be preserved and will go on. So I do believe in reincarnation. I believe there is something, whether you call it a soul, or some sort of consciousness."

Kevin: "Let's look at the world purely from the point of view of cause and effect. Everything that I am has been caused by the Universe - do you agree with that?"

Zachary: "Yes."

Kevin: "And I'm having effects on the world around me all the time. In a sense, energy is flowing through me out into the world. So I, what I am, whatever that is, is actually going out into the world - right at this minute it's going out on the airwaves, for example, and so I'm having effects."

Zachary: "So we think."

Kevin: "Well, we are, definitely. This is the way cause and effect operates. Whenever there's a cause, there's an effect."

Zachary: "I'd rather say this is what you believe, this is what your perception is, and so it is true to you. But whether we know whether it's objectively true is another issue. How could we ever place ourselves out of our subjectivity and say with certainty that this is occurring right now and we are going to air?"

David: "True, we can doubt that, but what about the very principle of cause and effect?"

Zachary: "Well, if this world is real or whether it's a delusion - whether we support the idealist theory or not - yes, it shows cause and effect in its nature. But whether we are just dreaming this--

David: Yes, but the dream would still have a cause.

Kevin: Yes, we're talking about the principle of cause and effect now. We're not talking about physical causes here, but the logical principle of cause and effect. So if there is a thing, it is caused and has effects."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Zachary: "Yes."

Kevin: "This is in a dual world. It doesn't matter what things we're talking about here. What I was trying to get to was that in a sense we're reincarnating all the time. So forget this kernel inside the body; everything about us, purely through cause and effect, is reincarnating. For example, we are reincarnating through the airwaves, out through people's radios, into people's minds. And the same thing happens the other way around."

Zachary: "Absolutely, cause and effect."

Kevin: "Yes, and this is reincarnation, because what I am and what you are is really going out into the world. And, of course, we're changing every moment as well, and other people in turn are becoming us. So all the people who have gone into making us - our parents, our teachers, authors of books which have influenced us - have made our consciousness what it is, and therefore they are our past lives. Do you agree with this?"

Zachary: "I agree wholeheartedly with what you're saying."

Kevin: "Right, so this is different from having a kernel inside the body, as something separate from the body."

Zachary: "I think the nut and the shell, the soul and the physical vehicle, is a neat way of thinking about it, but the truth of it would probably be a lot more interweaving and interconnected."

Kevin: "So, ultimately, there is no nut and kernel of the nut."

Zachary: "No, it's just a nice analogy."

Kevin: "So, in a sense, the body, if we can call it the body, reincarnates just as the consciousness does."

Zachary: "Definitely."

David: "Yes, but this whole issue of reincarnation, Kevin, is an empirical, scientific type question that is in the realm of probabilities. It's conceivable that the consciousness may survive death in some way, because we don't know everything about the body, and particularly about the mind. But whether this consciousness constitutes the self, this is the important question. Whether we are *logically* the consciousness, or whether we are infinite, is a separate question; it's a logical question, a logical issue."

Zachary: "This raises an interesting cross-roads that could display my differentiation between understanding and knowledge. That

is, at the point of death, I believe that our knowledge will be left behind and our understanding will carry forward."

David: "Well, I still don't know what you mean by this 'understanding'."

Zachary: "The collective realizations - the satoris, if you would."

David: "But they're still finite in some way, aren't they? These realizations are still finite existences."

Zachary: "What they're related to, the events which brought them about, which were the catalyst to them - yes, these fall by the wayside. But it is the essence--"

David: "Yes, but even this essence ... just the very fact that you can recognize their existence and you can say they're not trees, they're not cars--"

Zachary: "You can't readily recognize their existence in your life. You take them for granted. They're like a subconscious foundation."

David: "But what I'm saying is that they're not *everything*, these satoris, these altered states of consciousness. They're not microphones and things, they're specific phenomena which occur in our minds at some point, and so in this sense they're like anything else. They are like clouds: they come into being under certain causes and they dissipate again when the causes dissipate. They are of no more substance than anything else in the world because they are just finite objects."

Zachary: "I could take an argument here that may support the theory that they are carried over, these essences, these understandings - not by analyzing them but by detecting them in your life, you'll find that they're timeless. You can't really measure them. They do not take a form. They're more like a wavelength, a frequency, not anything to do with a physical body."

Kevin: "You're speaking of a kind of consciousness that many people experience occasionally during their lives?"

David: "A meditative type of experience, or an experience people have on drugs?"

Kevin: "An altered state type of experience, a 'religious experience'?"

Zachary: "To articulate it in simplistic terms: realizing 'something' in the morning and going through the day and being backed-up through different things, through your sensory experience, that you feel a building

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

inclination that you understand, not only empathise, but that you can truly get into the deeper significance of a certain insight."

David: "I'd characterize these experiences as illusions. I've experienced these states myself. I used to cultivate them when I was younger. And when I was younger, when I was about twenty, I used to think they had something to do with Nirvana, or God, or the Ultimate Wisdom, because they seem very profound and joyful and timeless. But I only had to think about it for a little while to see that they don't have *anything* to do with the Ultimate, because they are just finite happenings. They're illusions, at bottom, like everything else is an illusion."

Zachary: "But finite ..."

David: "Finite in the sense that they're experiences that one has - they need a consciousness to exist, for example."

Zachary: "But surely the effect it has on you lasts for the rest of your life."

David: "Sure, but all sorts of experiences can have a lasting effect. For example, if you're abused by your parents when you're young, it can have an effect for the rest of your life, but you wouldn't call this a mystical experience. Having LSD changes some people forever, and I wouldn't call that a genuine mystical experience."

Zachary: "You could argue that all experience is having an influence over the rest of your life."

David: "Yes."

Zachary: "But I would say that these understandings, if you like, are peaks. They are really potent, they are not just mildly influential."

David: "Sure, I'm not arguing against that. What I'm interested in is whether they have anything to do with reality."

Kevin: "Yes, so do these certain peak realizations have anything to do with a true understanding of the nature of reality? Because if someone realizes, for example, that life and death are illusory ... let's say they ask, 'Where did I come from?' and they look back at their life, at their body and their mind, and as hard as they try they can't find exactly where they darn well came into existence! They look at the point of conception but it doesn't satisfy them; they say, 'No, this is part of a process'. They trace it back further and they say, 'No, I can't find any point where I came into exist-

ence.' This can shock the mind to such a degree that a person can have quite a marked realization which can change the rest of their life. And this realization spreads throughout their consciousness - they don't have any choice about it, but they start applying the same reasoning and the same realization to everything else in their life. They ask, 'What about the people that I know and love - do they have a beginning as well?' And, all of a sudden, this is getting to be some real kind of knowledge of Ultimate Reality. But this is very, very rare, isn't it? A true realization is something which is a bit like a disease. It's like a virus: it starts off and then it breeds, *rapidly*, and before long the whole mind is consumed by this disease which is actually a realization of Truth. But the more common realizations people have in meditation don't have this same effect. They don't sweep over the whole mind with truth in a very short period of time, changing it forever, and totally transforming the person's life."

David: "Yes, a total transformation would engender in someone's mind the wish to become absolutely, perfectly truthful."

Kevin: "Beyond all attachment."

David: "It's a big one. Yes, these altered states used to interest me a great deal and I see that they do have a large effect on people's lives. I've met Buddhists who became Buddhists precisely because they had experienced some sort of altered state. You know, they just happened to be reading a book on Buddhism at the time, and suddenly they're Buddhists and believe in reincarnation! And you meet people who become born-again Christians via the altered state. And I once met a fellow who became a born-again atheist. He had an altered state of consciousness in a car crash - a near death experience - and he had this instant realization that Christianity was a load of rubbish and so became a born-again atheist. So you see, these sort of facts makes one question what these experiences are telling people. They're telling people all these different sorts of things."

Zachary: "A variety."

David: "That's right, but nevertheless these experiences still have a common core. They all have a common flavour to them, I've noticed. To my mind, they relate to infant consciousness. You know, when a child is two, three, four years old perhaps - before

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

he's really been deluged by adult concepts and his mind is still relatively flexible, colourful and vivid, and when he's still learning about concepts of time and so forth - he inevitably experiences 'timelessness' and that sort of thing. But as he grows older and has to conform to the adult world, he forgets. And then when he's twenty or thirty he has an experience - he experiences great grief, or has some drugs, or listens to music or something - and it reawakens this infant consciousness. It is this 'reawakening' which gives it the feeling of profoundness. It conjures up the emotions of childhood, those deeper childhood emotions."

Kevin: "They feel like they've arrived home, they've gone home."

David: "That's right, it seems familiar."

Zachary: "A remembering."

David: "That's right."

Kevin: "But there's no actual conscious recognition and conscious understanding. It's more of an unconscious experience which most people just accept without any desire to understand what the feeling actually is. Because it's only when there is a conscious desire to understand it that connections are made within the mind; the person starts to relate that timeless sort of feeling to everything within their life, and then it becomes a real realization. But when I look at the new age movement, it doesn't encourage this."

David: "Well, they do encourage the association of 'wisdom' with these altered states."

Zachary: "Certainly."

David: "And you'd agree with that?"

Zachary: "Absolutely."

Kevin: "That's interesting. I don't know whether you've looked very deeply into Buddhism, but there is something they call 'bodhicitta'. Now modern Buddhists think bodhicitta has something to do with compassion, but it's supposed to mean 'the enlightenment mind'. 'Bodhi' means enlightenment and 'citta' means mind, so 'bodhicitta' is the desire to achieve the perfectly enlightened mind. And the Mahayana Buddhists, as opposed to all other kinds, say this is the only path to true enlightenment. Because if there is no desire to become absolutely perfect, then almost nothing is achieved at all. No matter what kind of wisdom a person achieves, it's not real wisdom."

Zachary: "I would dispute that to become enlightened you need the desire to become enlightened. I would say that it is through having no path, seeking no God, that allows you the space, the gaps, for you to tune-in and become one with an Ultimate Force. So this is what I call the ironic system of the Universe. Everything I've found to be true seems to fall into a format of irony."

Kevin: "Yes, it's kind of true in a sense. But if a person has false thoughts inside their mind, and they know that they have, and they look at their own mind and they say, 'I don't want to have these false thoughts in my mind', you see--"

Zachary: "If they let go of those thoughts ... instead of arguing with them, let go."

Kevin: "Yes, that's right. So these false thoughts just dissipate. You just stop having them. But the desire to do that - and it's not an emotional desire, obviously; it is wanting to achieve the goal of having a perfect mind, and wanting to get rid of every last false thought, every attachment, every emotion - *this* is what needs to be stressed in modern times. But you don't see it anywhere."

Zachary: "But by saying that you have a goal, are you not presupposing that you are a distance from it? Because you'll be instilling a gap between you and what you want or what you are."

Kevin: "Yes, well, you have to do it wisely, don't you. You still have to speak and you still have to have concepts - even when you're perfect. So it's a matter of using these concepts skillfully, without being attached to them. If you're attached to this idea of a goal which is a long way away, then it's going to be a hindrance to your achieving it. But if you're not attached to these goals, then you arrive at them quickly."

David: "Obviously, if you want to arrive at any goal you have to have some sort of consciousness of that goal. But I'd like to move on to the subject of women, actually. I was interested in your posters, Zachary, which were advertising your course. You've got two of them. On one of them, you've got the big 'ULTIMATE WISDOM' in a black and white bold type of writing; and this other one is a nice pink one with flowery type of writing, and it's advertising the psychic arts. There's no 'WISDOM' or 'TRUTH' on this second one - it's all about clairvoyance and

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

how to see auras and so on. I was just wondering if it is your belief that women aren't capable of achieving the Ultimate Wisdom."

Zachary: "Absolutely *not*! I am in no way a misogynist or against women in their potential. The colour of my advertising is arbitrary. Each of those posters has a multitude of different colours which I advertise in. The Ultimate Wisdom course I do in green, red, white, or black, depending on where it is, or on what paper is available. And the psychic arts I have done in all sorts of colours - so it's just the luck of the draw, really."

Kevin: "What do you think about the two different kinds of consciousness? Men and women certainly have very different psychologies and therefore different types of consciousness. From your angle, do you think that either sex has an advantage when it comes to spiritual advancement?"

Zachary: "I believe that they're different. They are opposites. Yes, they'll cross over like anything else but the whole sexual binary is not immune from the polarities and the spectrum of binaries that go through the Universe. So I believe that women have a certain type of energy and men have a complimenting type of energy."

David: "So you do say that men and women are different?"

Zachary: "Yes, but to say that any one is *better*--"

David: "Well, it relates to your goal. If we have a goal of perfection, then obviously some traits are going to be better suited to achieving this goal than others. So would you say that the feminine or the masculine is better suited to achieving this wisdom?"

Zachary: "You'd have to go into specifics there. For example, women generally seem to expose a deeper receptivity, sensitivity, empathy. Men seem to have a lot more perseverance, stability, concentration. And so I would say that in a psychic art, for example, if a man was going to become a feeler of these invisible waves then I would say that the average woman - to just take a stereotypical view of a woman - would have more of an easy route, or more of a tendency to do that naturally than the average man would."

David: "What about the goal that Kevin and I were talking about before - which you seemed to agree with, if I remember correctly - the goal of being a Buddha, or a perfect

person, which is beyond emotions, beyond attachments. Do you think women are closer to this?"

Zachary: "I think we're all in the same boat. And I don't agree with the goal of becoming a Buddha, or relieving myself of all attachments. I find a lot of good life to live in the most hedonistic of things. And I think it's all part of the process. To say that I want to become segregated from attachment and emotions, at this stage, would be unnatural."

Kevin: "In other words, you're enjoying life too much at the moment to actually want to give it up."

Zachary: "Absolutely. And to say that it's an amazing state to be free of emotions ... I would not see that there's any fantastic--"

Kevin: "But can you see, though, that wherever there is emotional pleasure, pain is necessarily associated with it?"

Zachary: "Absolutely."

Kevin: "Always. Now some people can avoid these things for most of their lives. If they are very skillful, very intelligent, and if they live their lives in a clever way, they can be wealthy, have lots of pleasure, and never experience the bad fruits of their actions. This is left for their children and their ex-lovers and so on to experience all the bad fruits of emotional attachment. So if you can see that suffering is associated with all emotional pleasure, surely it can't be very satisfying for you to want to live that sort of life?"

Zachary: "This comes down to the fact that we often relate evil, negativity, suffering and pain as awful. Now, if a person gets a headache, often they will say 'This is a bad experience'. But I believe you can have a headache and quite enjoy it. And that you can get the worst of migraines and you can see the good in it, and harness it."

Kevin: "Right, but this is a skillful type of egotism - the ability to experience pleasure and then offset the pain."

David: "It's a type of madness too. It's like someone in a madhouse banging himself on the head with a hammer and giggling!"

Kevin: "... And saying, 'It doesn't hurt too bad'. But this is the thing: an individual may, through various subtle means, like meditation, be able to avoid the very painful pain of attachment, but other people are not so skilled. So, let's say you get into a relationship--"

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Zachary: "I don't particularly want to be skilled with that because I believe that you need the lows to enjoy the highs. If you exist in a state of perfection continuously then it would start to become very bland and very lifeless."

Kevin: "Well, this wouldn't be perfection then."

David: "Are you saying, Zachary, that Reality is bland and lifeless? I mean, if you define perfection as consciousness of Reality--"

Zachary: "I'm saying that the perfect individual would become lifeless. I would not say that Reality is lacking in its sparkle."

David: "So someone who is living directly in it, who is tapping fully into this sparkle ...?"

Zachary: "If they're in the sparkle, well great. But if they're in the state where they have transcended emotional flux, then I don't believe that it's necessarily going to make them any closer to Ultimate Reality. It may do. But you may just be walking down the street and Ultimate Reality may hit you for a split second ... You don't need to do all this meditation and discipline."

David: "But if you want to have consciousness of Reality for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, forever! ..."

Zachary: "But we're setting up some boundaries here that if you detach yourself from emotions then you're going to be enlightened."

David: "I wouldn't call it 'detachment'."

Kevin: "Call it transcending them. It's impossible for emotions to arise in the perfect state."

Zachary: "Okay, then complete detachment."

David: "No, no - they wouldn't even exist."

Kevin: "It's not a possibility."

David: "So it's not even detachment."

Zachary: "So the person would not even conceive of emotion?"

David: "He wouldn't experience them."

Kevin: "He'd be able to name them and he'd be able to talk about them. But in such a mind, in which the concept of a self does not arise, emotions simply do not arise. It's an infinite consciousness. This is the goal of a truly spiritual person - to become one, literal-

ly one, with Nature. This is sounding very New Age ..."

Zachary: "Why are emotions seen as an evil thing away from Nature? I see emotions as very much a part of the whole natural process."

Kevin: "Yes, they're certainly part of our lives in that this is the way we've evolved. Emotions are an important part of our bonding and so on. Man and woman fall in love, and through that emotional life they have children, and thanks to that we've now got almost six billion people overpopulating the planet. So it's definitely an important part of our world. But the goal of the spiritual person is to go beyond, or to transcend, or to leave behind all things that are false, and emotion is something which is false. When you trace where emotions come from, and what emotions actually are, you discover that they're based on a false view of the world."

David: "If a perfect person has no self, then he can't experience fear, or grief, or loss, or gain, or happiness - any of those things at all."

Kevin: "There's no consciousness of 'I want this, I need this to make me happy.'"

Zachary: "But I believe that a person walking down the street, even if they are not enlightened, who relishes emotions, can be just as much as perfect as someone who is disciplined on the spiritual path and done all these things that you're putting forth."

David: "What about the child molester, again? Is the child molester perfect?"

Kevin: "Is he just as perfect as the most wise of all wise men?"

Zachary: "To sum up what I think, I believe the world is perfect, totally, as it stands right now. So if there are crimes being committed right at this second, if there are atrocities going down, if there are wars happening, then so be it. It is perfect."

David: "It's a part of Nature, and all that."

Zachary: "Yes, it's a part of Nature. And to say that the Buddha is any more enlightened than an ignorant person--"

David: "Yes, but if one is to *value* this consciousness of enlightenment, then obviously one would not want to have ignorance in the world. If you want to become truthful then you want to get rid of falseness."

Kevin: "So even though wars and child molesting and so on are definitely very natu-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ral, and they're a part of our world, it's still the responsibility of the wise man, to the best of his ability, as far as is natural for him to do so, to get rid of all of these things. And if he does so, then this too is natural. So anything a person desires to do is actually natural, because it's part of the natural world, and the wise man, by definition, desires to get rid of all ignorance in the world. Now, Zachary, you're putting on a course of teachings in a week or so, so you obviously desire to get rid of *something*."

Zachary: "Well, what I'm basically saying is that Ultimate Wisdom does come down to ignorance. If you are going to live powerfully, transcending a lot of things, often ignorance can allow you to be immune from a lot of the rubbish that exists around you. So I see ignorance as just as much a valid path to wisdom as knowledge or understanding or the other way."

David: "So there's no path at all!"

Zachary: "There's no path if you expect--"

David: "And the Buddha was wrong?"

Zachary: "He's got a very valid path, probably. It would work."

David: "But because he's actually preaching a path, he's going against your idea that there's no path at all. So he must be wrong in your view."

Zachary: "You see, I say there's no path, but, because of my philosophy, that also means I believe that there is a path. So you can do it both ways. But I'm saying that often the way of 'The Path' can be very cumber-

some; you set yourself up with a lot of crutches. It's really something that is more contrived."

Kevin: "It comes down to attachment again. If you're attached to all these ideas of "The Path" and right and wrong and so on--"

David: "So you're speaking against a false path, but not against a true path - is that right? Or are you against all paths altogether?"

Zachary: "I'm with no path. If you take no path to God then I believe you'll get there just the same as if you took a path."

David: [ironically] "Well, that's pretty deep!"

Kevin: "What do you see yourself doing in, say, ten years? Do you see yourself still being single, perhaps still putting on courses? Do you see yourself getting into a relationship? What do you see for yourself?"

Zachary: "I have many relationships in my life now. I see myself in ten years as a person who will be writing upon the Truth, philosophy, religious things, the deeper sense of life, and I'll be speaking on such matters. Basically continuing my quest into the mysteries that fill all our lives."

Kevin: "Okay, I think we are going to have to leave it there. We'll be coming back next week, and our old friend Dan Rowden will be with us. And the week after that we'll be having a live performance of *The Banquet*. That's Kierkegaard's Banquet, so don't miss that one - it'll be a really exciting night. And that'll be our last program from the series of twenty. Okay, that's goodnight from us."⁶⁴

EXAMINING THE HOSTS

- A transcript from *The Hour of Judgment* radio series -
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Guests:

- Kevin Solway - Sage
- David Quinn - Sage

Host: Dan Rowden - Freelance philosopher

In all of the programs we had done thus far, not one of the guests had challenged us in any sustained way, even though we spent the entire time attacking their values and beliefs. This is perhaps understandable, considering that they were after all our guests. But nonetheless we did encourage them to do so, both explicitly and implicitly. For example, we would tell our guests before each show that it was to be a round-table discussion, a free-for-all, and that they were welcome to question us much as we questioned them. And then, to further facilitate this, we would do our level best on the show to shatter their professional facades and thereby provoke them into human consciousness. It rarely worked.

So Dan Rowden came up with the idea of him interviewing us. He would do what they wouldn't do. He would zero in on our beliefs and put them under the spotlight. He would play the role of the worldly person and challenge us from the worldly perspective, and try to lay exposed the true nature of what we are. Needless to say, this required Danny putting in a mammoth effort of concentration and discipline, for it's a very difficult thing for a human to fill the shoes of an animal. And all thing considered, he did a pretty fine job.

Dan: "Hello, and welcome to the penultimate edition in this series of *The Hour of Judgment*. My name is Dan Rowden, and I'll be your host for this evening. Now through the course of these programs we've heard regular hosts, David Quinn and Kevin Solway, put a number of people under the analytical spotlight - diverse people, eminent people, experts in their given fields of endeavour: priests, professors, Buddhist monks and masters, scientists, psychologists, feminists, and even one who claims to teach the highest wisdom - all of them critically scruti-

nized by this pair of self-professed sages. Well, tonight it's their turn. It's high time, I think, that their claims of wisdom and spiritual authority were put under that very same spotlight. And so, tonight, good evening to David and Kevin."

Kevin: "Good evening to you, Dan."

David: "G'day, Dan."

Dan: "And should I say, welcome to your program! Now, the first thing I want to ask you is precisely what it is that you value. Why do you have these values, and how did you arrive at them?"

Kevin: "Well, should I start answering that one, David?"

David: "Yes, go on, Kevin."

Kevin: "Well, being an egotist - a person who desires to be happy - I wanted the greatest happiness of all. This goes back to my early teens. And the greatest happiness is the thing which lasts the longest - the happiness which lasts the longest. Now the thing that lasts the longest of all is, of course, the Truth. You can be a football hero, you can be a pinball wizard, but these things don't last. Some five year old kid will come along, for example, and get the high score on the pinball machine. So you're not going to be the best at ordinary things in the world. But when it comes to Truth . . . Truth is something that never changes. And once you know the Truth, it's something that's with you for the rest of your life. It is insurmountable. So, personally, Truth is the thing I value above all, because it gave me the greatest amount of happiness."

Dan: "So, basically, you're saying that you value something that gives you permanent satisfaction."

Kevin: "That's right."

Dan: "Okay, what about you, David?"

David: "Well, I value Truth above all as well, but I think I came to it differently to Kevin. I was more motivated in a negative sense, rather than any striving for perfect happiness, because I never conceived of that in my younger days. I was more motivated by a fear of being in error. I didn't like being

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

insecure about being uncertain in my knowledge. I was brought up to be a total moron. For the first twenty years of my life, I was a moron. I was fully into sport, and I didn't have any intellectual aims in any way. It was only when I reached about twenty that I began to explore away from sport. I began getting more into aesthetics - exploring sunsets, music, drugs, and all that sort of thing. In fact, I was becoming a bit of a dropout. And then I began to think philosophically. So the first time I began to think philosophically wasn't until I reached about twenty, and it was like I was being born at that stage. It was around that time that I met Kevin, and it was through Kevin that I heard ideas about cause and effect and the spiritual path. And in an instant flash I saw the totality of the spiritual path, Ultimate Reality, the whole thing, and I haven't looked back since."

Dan: "So, basically, what you're saying is that for both of you this philosophic path, in many respects, was just a flight from suffering."

Kevin: "For sure. For me anyway, yes."

David: "Yes, definitely, but I didn't have this conception of perfect happiness. I mean, I was brought up with no ideals at all. I met nobody who had any ideals. I was brought up in the Catholic tradition, and the Catholic priests were just incredibly mediocre people. I mean, I remember one Catholic priest in particular - and there are many examples in my schooling from which I could choose - and his aim in life was to go to Heaven so he could play golf all day! This didn't inspire me at all. I mean, I was already playing golf all day in my teens! So I met nobody in my childhood who taught me to have ideals."

Dan: "Yes, okay. This concept of the flight from suffering was certainly my experience. I just couldn't handle people's inconsistency, their irrationality, the general insanity of the world. And the only way I could escape from that, I intuited, was to actually understand it."

David: "Totally. I found golf was a great teacher. Golf was my first teacher. I was a member of a golf club, quite a prestigious one in Brisbane, and there were politicians and doctors and lawyers and so forth with whom I played rounds with every weekend. I got to know some of them quite well, and I just found them to be incredibly mediocre people. They puffed themselves up - they thought

themselves to be great men, successful men - but their lives were incredibly petty. All they thought about was from one week to the next. It was very disappointing."

Dan: "Yes, all they thought about really was running away from suffering. The point that I want to make is that, in a qualitative sense, it seems to me that everyone is trying to escape suffering. So what makes you guys better or superior to anyone else?"

Kevin: "Well, I think I had a bigger ego. I wanted to avoid suffering more than everybody else. I'd seen that nobody else had done a very good job of it. Even those people who had largely escaped suffering, and who do live very happy lives - still, even they seemed incredibly fragile to me. I could see a thousand ways to upset their apple cart. And I wanted to place myself in a position, egotistically, that was perfectly safe, that had absolute security, that nothing in the whole universe could upset. And, of course, there is only one thing that is like that - and that's Truth. But, of course, the closer and closer I came to Truth, the less and less egotism was a factor in my desiring it."

David: "So by the time you reach this goal of complete security you no longer have any need of it."

Kevin: "Exactly. The egotism is so powerful it has consumed itself in its greed for perfection."

Dan: "Okay, that's fine. Now you guys talk about the ideal of 'Truth' ... you use the term 'Truth' a lot. Some might say, 'Sure, sure, sure, everyone does. I mean, I've heard it a million times. Big deal. What a load of garbage!' So what is this Truth? What is the substance and the essence of this Ultimate Reality that you keep talking about?"

Kevin: "Well, the Truth is what is real. And what is real is Infinite. In other words, it's unbounded. Full stop."

David: "Yes, that says it quite well. I concur." [Laughs]

Dan: "Is this some kind of objective reality?"

David: "Alright. I always saw Truth, the very concept of Truth, as something that has to be unchanging and permanent. Nothing would satisfy me as being Truth if there was any possibility it could be changed. That was my working definition, always. So I began to look at everything in the Universe to see what

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

was permanent, and there is only one thing that is permanent and that is *change*. So I began to examine the nature of change. What composes change? Cause and effect. So in this way you're heading down towards Ultimate Reality."

Dan: "Okay, but from an empirical point of view you can't make those claims. You can't talk about what everything is like in the Universe, because you haven't got a clue! You'd have to know what everything is like in the whole Universe. So how can you say there's nothing in the Universe that is permanent?"

David: "It's a logical truth. Anything that exists exists because we conceive it to exist. So if we stop conceiving a thing to exist, then it ceases to exist."

Kevin: "Hmm, that's a pretty big change, isn't it!"

David: "It applies to everything, so I don't need to experience everything in an empirical sense. But I can understand the very concept of "thing" and the concept of 'finiteness' in order to understand everything."

Dan: "Okay, but you seem to be creating definitions to provide that understanding. I can handle, and I think most people can handle, the idea that you can't empirically know everything, so you do have to get into the logical realm. But you seem to be defining this Reality for your own purposes. Is Reality just a matter of definition? And if so, who says your definitions are the correct ones?"

Kevin: "Well, Reality is a matter of definition. An ignorant person has certain definitions and has a certain reality, and a wise person, a person who understands Truth, also makes definitions and has a certain reality. And each of us, as individuals, has to choose which of those two we're going to go for. Either we're going to live in an ignorant reality, or we're going to live in a wise reality. Now both of them are perfectly natural, in that they happen in Nature, and we can go one way or the other. Ultimately, as far as Nature is concerned, it doesn't really matter whether we're ignorant or wise; but as individuals, as individuals who have potential to understand Ultimate Truth, it's our decision which way we're going to go."

Dan: "Yes, but someone could easily say that you're simply putting the tag 'wise' onto your definitions, and the tag 'ignorant' onto

other people's. At what point did you discover that your definitions were the correct ones?"

Kevin: "Well, it comes down to our definition of 'wise'. Now you know the saying, 'Ignorance is bliss.' Clearly, to a lot of people ignorance is actually wisdom, and the more ignorant you are the more wise you are! For example, if you don't claim to know anything at all, then it's hard for anybody to disagree with you. So it's a way to be happy. It's a form of safety. But I, personally, define wisdom to be a very particular thing - which is my choice - that's how I define it, as a wise person. End of story. Reality is definitely a matter of definitions, and it all depends on whether a person has a conscience as to which reality they're going to choose, and how they're going to make definitions, and what they're actually going to call 'wise'. Are you going to call ignorance 'wise'? It's your choice."

David: "But you haven't given any reasons, Kevin, why your conception of reality is the wise one."

Dan: "And that's what I'm pressing at."

Kevin: "Well, wise means insurmountable by using correct reasoning."

David: "So you've defined wisdom in this way - that it's unchanging, insurmountable, that sort of stuff."

Kevin: "That's right. Wisdom is unable to be defeated by correct reasoning."

David: "So it's still a conception."

Kevin: "Sure."

David: "And ... I'm sorry, Danny, I'm taking over your role here."

Dan: "That's fine, you're doing a good job there. Yes, people will hear that, and they will think, 'Oh well, fine. If he wants to define reality in that way, and call it wise, then good luck to him. I'll define reality a different way and I'll call *that* wise.' So all these qualitative judgments you make about people being inferior and all that sort of stuff doesn't hold water, if definitions are arbitrary ..."

Kevin: "Well, at this point, I would try to appeal to what conscience people have in them. Some people do have a small element of conscience - just the tiniest spark. And that conscience suggests to them that they are responsible for the future of the human race, and for the younger generation. So I will put to those few people, that handful of people

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

who have a conscience, 'Look, what kind of a world do you want for people in the future? Do you want them to be slaughtering each other with machine guns, wife-bashing, you know, the whole thing, battle of the sexes, sex games,--'"

David: "Cuddling in the park."

Kevin: "--cuddling in the park, jealousy, fighting, cheating at exams, the whole thing, the whole of life. Turn on the TV and you see pain and suffering--"

David: "You're talking about the very stuff of life here, Kevin!"

Kevin: "Yes, I'm talking about the stuff of life."

David: "And you're referring to a very boring world if all that's eliminated."

Kevin: "It'll be boring to the majority of people, but the people with conscience will think to themselves 'No, hang on, I don't want us to go on the way we are.' We now have a population that's getting close to six billion people, climbing rapidly towards ten billion, and the total destruction of our planet - all because of the way we are living *now*. People with a conscience will say, 'This can't go on. I don't want to be responsible for what's happening to this planet.'"

Dan: "Okay, let me just move on a little bit. You also talk a lot about reason. You obviously place a great deal of value on reason. You seem to make this inexorable, inevitable link between wisdom and the faculty of reason, and you basically dismiss everything else as not having as much value. Why?"

Kevin: "Well, I don't dismiss intuition, because intuition is something which is just hard-wired into the consciousness."

Dan: "The intuition experience provides us with data to work with, doesn't it?"

Kevin: "Exactly. And then with reason we can then verify whether that data is correct or not. So reason is essential to find out whether our intuitions are correct."

Dan: "A lot of people would say that reason is limited, and that you can't have a complete faith in it. How do you know that your reason isn't faulty? I mean, most philosophers who have ever lived would say that they are totally dedicated to reason, that it's the only faculty they really value, and yet you would dismiss about ninety-nine percent of them. So how do you know that *your* reasoning is correct?"

David: "Well, regarding these philosophers that you're referring to, I would say that they didn't go far enough in their reason. So even though all through the Western tradition of philosophy, we had all these so-called rational philosophers who had all these different points of view and so forth, what you find is that they actually had attachments to certain points of view, and they used reason to justify these viewpoints. Now, the difference between them and myself, and Kevin, is that we go all the way and we use reason fully, through the whole spectrum of life. And I'm motivated by this idea that I don't want to be deceived in any way in the slightest degree. I want to have Truth and I want to know that I have Truth, *for sure*. So I think if anybody has that sort of motivation, they will definitely come to understand what is ultimately real."

Kevin: "Yes, a lot of people - I think it's just a human quality - have an ability to compartmentalize their mind. So they may appear to be an extremely rational person in many areas of their life, but in other areas of their life they're not reasonable at all. So, in fact, they've partitioned off parts of their mind which reason can never enter into. And for this reason, I wouldn't call such people rational. A rational person, to my view, is a person whose reason is totally integrated with the whole of their mind. So there's no thought that the person who has that doesn't find a place within his reason and his reasoned view of the world."

David: "An obvious example is Descartes. Now, interestingly, he started off with the premise that he didn't want to be deceived. He wanted to question everything in order to eliminate 'the Demon', as he put it, the demon of doubt. So he questioned perceptions, and everything in the Universe ... until, that is, he came to the concept of self, which he didn't question."

Dan: "Well, his starting point, his philosophical starting point, *Cogito ergo sum*, 'I think therefore I am', necessitates the reality of a self, so he didn't question anything at all!"

David: "Precisely, and then he went on to deduce the existence of God! Obviously, he was motivated by an attachment to the concept of God in order to do what he did. So he was an incredibly corrupt person."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "In fact, reason only took up a very small part of Descartes mind - I'd say of the order of about one percent, with ninety-nine percent of his mind being totally devoid of any reason at all."

David: "The same with Kant and all the heroes of academic philosophy - they were very, very poor in their reasoning."

Dan: "Well, that's a scary thought considering that a lot of academics would say that Descartes actually began the true Western analytical tradition."

David: "Which proves my point!"

Dan: "You also suggest that those people who say there are limitations to reason are actually being kind of arrogant, because they're not saying, 'There are limitations to my reason.' They're actually projecting their limitations onto everyone else in the entire world and saying, 'Oh well, if I have limitations, then everyone must.'"

Kevin: "Yes, I'd say it's extremely negative, extremely pessimistic, extremely arrogant, extremely judgmental--"

Dan: "And very, very harmful. The damage that academic philosophers have done is incalculable, because, nowadays, people believe that reason is limited, useless, crippled--"

Kevin: "A joke."

David: "So everyone's turning towards the emotions - because that's the only thing that's left - and it's due directly to these academic philosophers. Because they're the ones who are saying that they're using reason, when they're *not* using reason - not in the proper full-on manner - and so they're giving reason a bad name."

Kevin: "We live in a world where if you use the word 'Truth' people just laugh at you. This is the world which we live in! This is the world that we're bringing children into!"

David: "And you get the young people who go and do a first year course in philosophy, and they go through all the arguments ... I remember attending a first year course down in Tasmania, and the Professor would sum-up the various arguments on various issues, and he'd say, for example, that there are certain arguments for free-will and certain arguments for determinism and so forth, and he'd sum up by saying, 'The real solution to these problems is a mystery. I don't think the human mind can ever come to know it. Phi-

losophers have been debating these issues for thousands of years and no-one has yet come up with the answer.'"

Kevin: "They should be shot."

David: "Yes, definitely."

Dan: "Even wearing my Devil's advocate hat, as I am tonight, I have to admit I find that kind of stuff bordering on evil."

Kevin: "*Bordering* on evil? ... you're having a bit of compassion there, Danny!"

Dan: "A bit of compassion, yes. I'm sparse with my use of the word 'evil' ... Yes, I see this fear of the word 'Truth' to be understandable, given that it has been used by so many fanatics, so many dangerous and violent groups. The scepticism about it, I would of thought, was kind of understandable."

Kevin: "That's right. It actually would be a crime for many people today to use the word 'Truth'. It would be a slander of the word. But it would be nice if people were intelligent enough to use the word 'Truth' with some validity, and some respect."

David: "Yes, you'd have to put the religions into this box as well. Together with the academic philosophers they make a powerful foe. Christians, for example, make a claim for Truth, but they're not the slightest bit interested in understanding anything."

Dan: "What? You've got an enormous theological institution in the world, which is constantly examining theological and philosophical issues, so how can you say that they're not pursuing this Truth?"

David: "They're like the academic philosophers. They have a particular viewpoint, and they use their reasoning to try and bolster this viewpoint."

Kevin: "What's the saying? 'A theologian is like a blind person in a dark room, looking for a black cat which isn't there - and finding it.' That sums it up perfectly, I think."

David: "That's right. It's a lost cause."

Dan: "Would you say also that a person who really values Truth could not possibly exist within a belief structure? That the two things just can't go hand in hand?"

Kevin: "Certainly, that's true for the belief structures like we find in the churches we have today, yes."

David: "What about *any* belief structure?"

Kevin: "Well, *true* belief structures are true, by definition."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "But *submitting* to any belief structure is wrong. A particular belief structure could well be true, but someone who just accepts it unthinkingly is actually committing a false act. So, for example, the Tibetan Buddhists that we meet up the North Coast at Chenrezig have quite a good traditional canon of teachings about Emptiness and so forth, but the people we meet there just submit to these teachings unthinkingly. They worship the teachers up there as gods. They just accept the teachings uncritically. So even though they might mouth the right words about what is real, because they have no understanding of it, it's actually false."

Kevin: "And it's actually blasphemy. Whenever these people who call themselves religious mouth any words to do with Truth or God, or anything like that, it's the worst form of blasphemy."

David: "The more a person *appears* to be good, and actually isn't, the more damage he does."

Dan: "So you're basically saying that, without a complete knowledge of Ultimate Reality, no statements of belief can possibly be valid."

David: "Exactly. Yes ... I don't need to add to that, do I?"

Kevin: "In the scientific area, in empirical science, words like 'truth' can be used, but it has to be understood that they're *scientific truths*."

Dan: "But the word 'truth' isn't really used in science. They call them 'facts'."

Kevin: "Yes, but they do sometimes speak of reality. Science believes that it's getting closer and closer to a correct model of reality - they have some sort of ideal that they're hoping to reach one day. So they do have some sort of a concept of truth or reality, even though they may not use those words. But as I say, they have to understand that what they're aiming for is *not* Ultimate or Absolute Truth, which is the only real truth."

Dan: "Well, isn't this also one of the great delusions of modern culture? And this is one of the reasons why philosophy is no longer seriously valued, because everyone has this twisted view of science: that science is actually working towards what philosophy used to be about."

Kevin: "Yes, the attitude, 'We don't need to do anything because the scientists are

doing it all, and we'll get there eventually because the scientists are doing a very good job, and we're doing our part by paying them through our taxes.'"

Dan: "Quite so. But it only takes a couple of sentences and a couple of thoughts to demonstrate that science has got nothing to do with Ultimate Truth. So what's the problem? Why do people think this way? Do they not value Truth or what?"

Kevin: "I think people are just afraid. Once people get over the age of about twenty-five - in men, about twenty-five; in women, about sixteen - they are committed to a certain lifestyle, and any kind of knowledge that there's some Truth which is much bigger than anything they already know threatens to overturn everything in their life - their whole personality, their whole identity. And this is why they will not accept anything which is more than what they already are and what they already know."

Dan: "Right, you're talking about attachments."

Kevin: "Yes, they are attached to their opinion of themselves."

Dan: "So attachments are a major stumbling block to any pursuit of real knowledge."

Kevin: "Attachment is the *only* stumbling block."

David: "Well, I'm coming to the opinion that there's a window of opportunity in a person's life, and probably in every person's life, though I'm not too sure. Young children have short phases where they learn new skills - they might be speaking skills, or some new emotional conception of the world, for instance. This phase comes abruptly and lasts for only a short period, and if the child doesn't exercise this new skill during this time then it doesn't become a part of them. So I think that in a person's life, perhaps somewhere between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, there's some sort of philosophic phase, where suddenly their brain flourishes for a little while and they begin to have a serious question about existence. And if they're not brought to favourable circumstances during this period - if they don't meet the correct person, or happen to read a good book, or if they don't happen to make a breakthrough in their thinking during this period, then they're lost - forever."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "Because they become committed to their attachments after that stage."

Dan: "It's long been my view that teenagers, say, from about thirteen through to about seventeen, have a clarity of insight into the reality of the world that is really quite astounding in some respects, and they look around for some sort of verification of what they're feeling, some sort of support, anything, some sort of consistency in the world, and they generally don't find it. And they hit the age of about eighteen, and that's when they're forced out into the world to become part of the world, so they hit this point of resignation, where just to survive they have to abandon all this clarity of thinking - what adults see as cynicism - and they have to resign themselves to being part of the world."

David: "That's right. The opportunity is lost because they're living in a society where people don't give a damn about Truth at bottom, and don't even believe it is possible to achieve. So young people aren't given any encouragement. So it's only a matter of luck--"

Kevin: "I must say I feel very fortunate living in this country where we can, to some degree, cut our own path. When I finished high school I knew I didn't want to enter the world, and I had lots of things that I wanted to sort out in my mind. So I thought the best thing I can do is go to Uni for four years, where I can do nothing, and spend all my time thinking. And even when I finished Uni I had the opportunity to go on the dole. And it was through those processes that I became a thinking person."

David: "Well, I definitely think the welfare system is the greatest invention of mankind to date."

Dan: "Yes, but the arguments against that are so obvious! Everyone can't just turn around tomorrow and become philosophers--"

David: "Why not?"

Dan: "Society obviously couldn't sustain it."

David: "I see. If we all became philosophers, the economy would collapse and we'd all starve to death."

Dan: "Yes!"

Kevin: "It'd be a nice way to go out though, wouldn't it!"

Dan: "Let's face it, people on the dole still have to live. They have to have income, and products, and so someone has to supply all those things."

David: "Yes. But there's not going to be some kind of spiritual revolution like that. The whole process of wisdom is a gradual thing."

Kevin: "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it."

Dan: "In other words, if society began to value Truth more the economy would evolve towards that."

David: "The economy would change. But there's no chance of a spiritual revolution in the near future. So to all of you out there: Don't be alarmed!"

Kevin: "There's no chance we'll have a whole world of sages, so we're safe."

Dan: "Well, I agree with that totally. We might take a bit of a break at the moment ... and afterwards I want talk about what is actually human, and what is the animal, in man. And also part of that discussion will be the feminine and masculine aspects of mind. And to facilitate that discussion we've got a piece of music here which could be very interesting."

[MUSIC BREAK]

Excerpt from "Dogs" by Pink Floyd.

You've got to be crazy.

Gotta have a real name

Gotta sleep on your toes

When you're on the street

Gotta be able to pick out the easy meat

With your eyes closed.

Then, moving silently, down wind and out of sight

You've got to strike when the moment is right

Without thinking

And after a while

You can work on points for style

Like a club tie

And a firm handshake

A certain look in the eye

And an easy smile

You have to be trusted

By the people that you lie to

So that when they turn their backs on you

You'll get the chance to put the knife in.

You gotta keep looking over your shoulder

You know it's going to get harder

As you get older

And in the end you'll pack-up

Fly down South

And hide your head in the sand

Just another sad old man

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

*All alone
Dying of cancer.*

Dan: "Welcome back to the one and only *Hour of Judgment*. I'm Dan Rowden, and I'm speaking with Kevin Solway and David Quinn. Now, after that wonderful piece of music--"

David: "That's very professional of you, Danny. We never do that on this show - reintroduce the guests after the music."

Dan: "It's just to help me get my thoughts together, really. No other reason for it. Now one of the other things that you gents spend a lot of time talking about, and you seem to place a great deal of importance on, is the issue of what is truly human - in other words, psychology. You talk about women a lot, about the feminine and masculine aspects of mind. Why is this particular issue so important to you?"

Kevin: "I think what we talk about most of all is consciousness and unconsciousness. We say that feminine consciousness is unconscious, and masculine consciousness, which is all too rare, is conscious. Now, if we're going to arrive at an understanding of Truth then this requires consciousness. I don't think I need to explain the reasons why. So that's why David and I encourage, above all else, consciousness. I mean, consciousness is the first step on the way towards Truth. Now I was lucky enough to have it during my teens, but most people are not so fortunate. They simply do not have consciousness. And by that I mean a conscious awareness of their existence in the world - a conscious awareness of the relationships between themselves and other things. A curiosity. A responsibility."

Dan: "Yes, but the standard line, the standard idea, is that ... you mentioned the word 'relationships'. I mean, women know all about that. That's their reality."

Kevin: "Wrong. They don't know anything."

Dan: "Yes they do! They're constantly in this mode of relationships. They know all about connectedness!"

Kevin: "I'm sorry. They know nothing about anything. That's the reason why they actually know so much. Because women have no desire to understand the real psychology between the sexes, that's the reason they can say so much. It's the reason why they can

produce so many women's magazines, which go over the same material week after week - you know, 'How to win that man', 'How to be good in bed', and so on. All of these things women have to go continually over and over, because they don't know it. There's nothing inside the feminine consciousness where knowledge can stick and become permanent and have a relationship to anything else."

Dan: "So you're saying women have no real steady understanding of anything, and so have to have everything reinforced constantly."

Kevin: "It's virtually indescribable. Try to describe the consciousness of a chimpanzee. Try to describe the consciousness of a cat. It's very hard. Such is a woman's consciousness."

Dan: "When we talk about 'women', you're not suggesting that just because a woman has breasts and a uterus that they necessarily fall into this category?"

Kevin: "That's an important point. I think most people today are extremely sexist, because they think that anyone with a female body is female. And I think this is a terrible, terrible crime. We should be judging people on the quality of a person's *mind*, and *not* on the crude shape of their body."

Dan: "So when you're talking about 'woman', you're talking about the feminine aspect of mind."

Kevin: "Yes, I'm talking about the feminine aspect of mind. That's right. So there are many women out there, or some anyway, who have a masculine mind. And they think of themselves as men. There aren't many of them, but there are some. And it's a great crime to treat those people as though they were women, when in actual fact they are men."

David: "I think those type of women that you refer to have it doubly difficult as compared to men. Because in men it's expected of them to have some sort of independence. If a man begins to think about life, it's not so unusual. Everybody thinks of men as having some individuality. But once a woman begins to think, immediately the whole world comes down on top of her - especially her fellow sisters. I find that what women hate most of all is an individual woman - a woman who wants to break away from her femininity and become human."

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Kevin: "That's why there's such a great amount of animosity these days in the feminist movement towards the older style feminists, like Germaine Greer, who did actually make the first steps towards masculinity."

David: "Or Camille Paglia."

Kevin: "Yes, they have made the very first steps towards becoming men. And the rest of the feminist movement is basically just stomping on them."

David: "That's right. Any woman who is not part of the fashion of the moment, women hate."

Dan: "Okay, David, you used the word 'human', and you used it in such a way as to exclude women from that category. So what is the human? Is the feminine mind, or the feminine aspect of mind, not the human aspect? Are you associating reason with 'the human'?"

David: "Exactly. I'd call anybody 'human' who thinks Truth is valuable, and who wishes to make it a part of their lives."

Dan: "Someone who consistently values reason, in other words."

David: "Right. And anybody who desires to understand Truth automatically reasons."

Kevin: "I'd say that most importantly they have to have a fear, a deep-seated fear, of being in error. David was saying earlier that he was motivated by this fear of being in error. He'd be ashamed of himself if he said something that wasn't true. So this is what is human - a fear of being in error. This is very similar to what Socrates used to say. He's another good example of a human being. But the feminine consciousness has no fear of being in error. It actually has no consciousness of error. It has no consciousness of either truth or error. So there's no fear, no joy - nothing."

David: "You could characterize the love of Truth as a sort of love of Nature. I mean, we've been flung into existence, and the most natural question to a human mind is 'Why?', and 'What is this existence?' I can't think of any more basic, more simple, more important questions than these. So a human is one who wishes to solve these questions."

Kevin: "It's interesting to look at the currently popular philosophy. It is a philosophy held by virtually every guest we've had on this program over the series of eighteen programs that we've already done - this is the

nineteenth - and nearly all of our guests have been saying that they don't believe Absolute Truth is possible. When we ask them if they're absolutely sure that it's not possible, they say, 'No, it's only a matter of probability.' They're not sure, they only *think* absolute truth isn't possible. Yet they're not devoting all their time to find out whether it *is* possible!"

David: "That's a good point."

Kevin: "So this is a sign that they're not what David and I would call human."

David: "Exactly."

Kevin: "If a human being is not sure of something - if he's not sure that Truth is knowable - then he will devote his entire life till he's answered that question. He wouldn't be able to live with himself, he wouldn't be able to sleep until he knows whether he can live a worthwhile life. But most people are unconcerned. They don't really need to know whether their life is worthwhile or not."

Dan: "I tend to express it this way - that it's the faculty of reason that differentiates us from all other species. It's reason that makes you human, and so to the degree that you value reason, that is the degree to which you're human. And if you really value reason, then you value consistency of thought and so you necessarily gravitate towards absolute certainty."

Kevin: "A lot of people think that being able to think intuitively is a sign of being intelligent. But the problem is, all animals have intuitions."

Dan: "Yes, but that gets down to definitions of wisdom, doesn't it. A lot of people would say that animals are wise!"

Kevin: "That's true. But can we say that a pen - I've got a biro in my hand - is intelligent? Can we say that it is wise? Can we say that it is courageous and compassionate and loving? No, we can't. Now you might say that, 'Oh yes, but this pen is not an animal'. But it *is*, in a sense. It is an object that acts in the world. It reacts to stimuli, just the same as very simple animals would do. So all things are the same, yet they vary in the degree to which they are conscious. Not all things are equally conscious - if we define consciousness in a particular way."

Dan: "Okay, I really want to press this feminine aspect of mind issue. What's really so bad about it? What's so bad about the

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

emotions, for instance? I mean, people value the emotions. It's reality. Everyone has them. What's so bad about the emotions?"

David: "I'm not so sure that women even value the emotions, unless the fashion dictates it so. But we'll just assume that it's the case."

Dan: "Well, they gain pleasure from emotional experience."

David: "The feminine consciousness, because it seems pure, and it seems innocent, and it seems godly under some circumstances, persuades men to believe it's on a higher plane to themselves. And there comes a time when men are seeking some sort of higher happiness, and the nearest object that seems to have this is woman. So they get involved with women and in the process they get dragged down by women, because women don't actually possess this purity - it's only an appearance. So women actually drag men down, and that's why I speak against them."

Dan: "As you were talking, I was just thinking about how I just said that women gain pleasure from emotional experience. But perhaps that's not really the case because it's so utterly natural to them. It may be more true to say that they don't suffer through emotional experience, whereas men do."

David: "It's a bit like asking a fish whether it values water. It doesn't know anything other, so it's a non-question."

Kevin: "I think it's important to say, and I think I said earlier in the program, that if a person is happy with their emotions, then so be it. But I'm certainly going to try and make them dissatisfied with what they are satisfied with, purely because that's what I do. Nature has made me the way I am: I want to become perfectly wise; I want to get rid of all false thoughts from my mind. Now when I look at the world I realize very quickly that all other people are not separate from me. Just like my hand is connected to my body, and therefore my hand is a part of my body, other people, too, no matter how ignorant they are, they are connected to me through various means - physically, mentally, in all ways they are connected to me. And therefore other people are literally a part of my own body. So if I want to become wise then I will do my utmost to make other people wise as well. Because I'm only being consistent."

David: "That's the point - consistency. It comes down to whether you want to lead a nonsense life. If people want to live in the world of emotions, it's impossible to not lead a nonsense life. Because it is out of the desire for happiness that suffering is brought into the world. So if you want to be happy, and you want your family to be happy, or you want happiness to be brought into the world, then the last thing you should do is actually search for happiness - in an egotistical sense - because all it does is create misery."

Kevin: "How noble is it for a man to tell a woman, one day, that he loves her - and she believes him - and then the next day he tells her that he doesn't love her? Because this is what is happening. Everyday in everybody's lives, this is what people are doing. They're being inconsistent. It's something people should be ashamed of, and I plan to make them ashamed of it."

Dan: "Well, it may also be possible that one day he did love her and the next day he didn't. I'm not sure what you're saying."

Kevin: "This is definitely the case, but the point is that it's not ..."

David: "It's not consistent over time."

Dan: "Emotions are inherently fickle."

David: "They're not even a part of us."

Kevin: "It's not absolute. If something is not absolute it's completely worthless. That's what I was trying to say. If love is not absolute, then that love is worth nothing. It takes a human person to be able to appreciate this. A human person, of course, is a person who desires permanence and consistency. So a human person wants love to be *forever* - total and complete."

David: "Emotions are like alien lifeforms that enter the brain from outside and take control and send you off in some direction causing you to do something that you have no real consciousness of doing, and which you'll probably come to regret later. It's a very sad state of affairs, I think. I don't know how people can praise it."

Dan: "You seem to be saying that emotions are a type of temporary insanity."

David: "Exactly. So if a person is emotional all the time, then he's insane all the time."

Dan: "So the emotions undermine reason."

Kevin: "It's like being on drugs, I think. They're identical, actually. In our society we

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

don't think it's good for people to be on drugs while they're at work. As it happens we think it's okay for people to take drugs when they're away from work. But with emotions, people are actually high on drugs twenty-four hours a day, and it effects their work. People can't think clearly when they're being emotional. This is another reason why people who are human fear being emotional, because they fear that their minds will be clouded and foggy, and they'll make incorrect judgments."

David: "Yes, so it is funny when you hear about people who complain about the wars. There's something like eighty wars in the world at the moment, yet you can see that people do nothing in their lives to eliminate the causes of war. They're busy chasing love, trying to bring more love into the world, causing even more wars to occur."

Kevin: "And the horrible thing is that wars are actually good for the TV ratings. That's why all the news and current affairs is about wars. All the movies are about violence and sex and rape. All of these low, low, low things are the things that the TV companies know people want to watch."

David: "Yes, people enjoy all the emotional ups and downs."

Kevin: "The more pain there is, the more people enjoy it! How noble is that!"

Dan: "What's this stuff about 'love causes wars'? There are thousands of people fainting right now, thinking, 'What sort of an idiot would say that? How does love cause wars?'"

David: "Well, if you love your wife, for example, and someone enters your home and tries to rape your wife, then the first impulse is to pull out the shotgun and shoot the intruder."

Dan: "So, basically, you're saying love produces attachments, and it's attachments that produce violence."

David: "If you didn't love anything at all, then you'd have no reason to shoot people."

Kevin: "Some wars are justified. For example, the war against ignorance, which we're carrying out right now, is a justified war. And I definitely want to make something extinct. Now I know it's not politically correct to make things extinct, but I want to make ignorance extinct. Now this is a war, and it's a justified war, because it's a wise war. There's no emotional attachments involved in this particular war. But the kind of

war that everybody enjoys, unfortunately, is not that war."

David: "No, the kind of war people like is to do with promoting the self. For example, the attack that Australia has made on France in the last few weeks - you can see the euphoria; people have become hysterical over what the French are doing. It's all totally out of proportion, I think, to what the French are doing. It's emotional. It's a drug."

Kevin: "It's conceivable that the reaction of Australia recently, may, down the track, trigger the Third World War. It's possible. Australia could be responsible for the flaring-up of another world war through their emotional reaction to France."

Dan: "I guess there is a certain law and order/punishment hysteria in Australia at the moment, and statistically there's no real basis for it. But doesn't it get down to the fact that people just get bored? Isn't it because there are no ideals? And why have the ideals disappeared?"

David: "There's nothing like a good war to clean the slate. A man might be bored with his job; he's fighting with his wife at the moment; he's feeling a bit insecure; he's having a bit of a squabble with the neighbours or something - and along comes a good war and the whole thing is gone! Suddenly, you're bonding with everyone in the country--"

Kevin: "There's so much love during a war, isn't there!"

David: "You join the army, get a new rank, new status, pleasure, attention--"

Kevin: "Lots more babies are born."

Dan: "Lots more purpose."

David: "And that's why there are so many wars about, because people love them."

Dan: "But why has idealism disappeared from society? What's the major element of that?"

David: "Love and wars."

Kevin: "And it's partly because of the size of the human population, I think. Even though the population has been growing, the world has been shrinking, and there are no frontiers any more. So men have largely been made redundant. They are no longer really needed to protect women. Women can pay police forces to do that for them, or security firms and alarms and so on. So strength, these days, has become largely redundant. We've

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

virtually consumed all the resources this world has to offer, and until we start going to other planets there aren't going to be any more frontiers."

David: "The world has kind of 'matured' in a way, hasn't it? In the last century, it was still young and naive."

Kevin: "It had some testosterone, didn't it?"

David: "Yes, but now we've entered middle-age."

Dan: "Yes, but a lot of people would say that when you look at history, and political imperialism, you see that frontier breaking has caused an incredible amount of misery and has destroyed civilizations - it's caused nothing but harm really."

David: "It's *created* civilizations as well, as well as destroyed them."

Dan: "I guess that gets down to how you want to define civilization as well."

Kevin: "I think a lot of it is basically the uprising of the feminine consciousness--"

Dan: "That's what I was getting at, actually."

Kevin: "It's to do with the lack of frontiers. That's the way the feminine consciousness has got a foothold. Today we live in an age which is probably more feminine than any other in history. I think it's basically the end. If we can't get out of this state we're in, we're doomed as a species."

David: "Well, there is a bit of hope for the future. I see that they've recently discovered

the ion-thruster rockets which will make space travel much more efficient and faster. So there's a chance we'll survive yet."

Dan: "I'm kind of troubled by this frontier concept. To me the one important frontier is the frontier of philosophic understanding. And that's the only frontier that should be pushed."

Kevin: "True."

David: "Okay, I might close off the show actually, Danny, because this is our second last program and next week we have *The Banquet* by Kierkegaard. I'd just like to say that all our programs are on tape, and anybody can get in contact with us if they want copies of any show in the past: that's PO Box 207, St. Lucia, 4067. And I might also add that we're compiling all the transcripts of the programs, all twenty programs will be on paper, and we're compiling them into one big book. And I must say that reading through some of them, they make very good reading: there's a lot of humour, and a lot of wisdom. So if you want to enquire about copies of that you can contact us at the address I just mentioned. Do you want to close off the program, Danny?"

Dan: "Thanks very much, I thought you were going to do that yourself. Well, it's been very interesting talking to you and to have the chance to clarify, to some degree, in the space of an hour, which is fairly limited, what you guys are on about. And I think that's been one of the better things. Thanks."⁶⁵

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

THE ATHEIST 1992-1995

The Newsletter of the Atheist Society (Australia)

"The Atheist Archives is a collection of newsletters and some of the interesting correspondence of The Atheist Society of Australia. Among the correspondence are letters with Canadian naturalist David Suzuki and in-depth correspondence with Australian media personality Phillip Adams." – Kevin Solway

THE ATHEIST SOCIETY

- General Information -

Office Bearers: Dan Rowden, Kevin Solway, David Quinn

Editor of "The Atheist": Kevin Solway

The Atheist Society is a socially concerned organization. It consists of individuals from various academic and social backgrounds, each having a knowledge of the nonexistence of God and an uncompromising rejection of all concepts of God, be they metaphysical or socio-political in nature. Members of this society do not adopt a non-committal, agnostic viewpoint and are therefore openly anti-religious.

The following is a brief outline of the basic principles and goals of the Atheist Society:

1. To seek the truth in all things.
2. To uphold the principle of intellectual freedom and to encourage freedom of thought and expression both within educational institutions and the broader community.
3. To actively and publicly seek to debunk religious and philosophic mythology using rational and reasoned argument.
4. To uphold the value of truth and reason in all intellectual pursuits and to restore pragmatism to its rightful place within these pursuits.
5. To encourage intellectual discernment and to expose the falsity of the modern nihilistic philosophy of relativism.
6. To challenge any social tradition which is founded upon superstition or false concepts.

Vol. 1 No. 1, Oct, 1992

Editorial

Welcome to the first atheist newsletter. My aim is to make it clear what atheism is and how genuine atheism improves humanity.

Atheism however is a very simple subject which can be more than adequately dealt with in just a few lines, so the scope of this newsletter will necessarily extend beyond atheism. Hopefully it will make you think about all the important things you have always avoided.

Two kinds of people claim to be atheists. The first kind are those who have not thought about the existence of a God and therefore

cannot be expected to believe in such a thing, or who having thought about it see no sufficient reason to believe. The second kind of atheist are those who know with certainty that the existence of a God is impossible. These latter few I call the true atheists. The former kind take no position on the matter, not even that of agnosticism - they deserve a name of their own so I call them "floaters".

Probably the strongest argument for God is a functional one. That is, we need to believe in God, even if he is not there, because such a belief creates social order and generally

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

makes us happy. In other words, the only excuse for God is that He doesn't exist. But as Phillip Adams (honourary member of the Atheist Society) says in his book "Adams vs God":

"Marx was wrong. Religion is not the opiate of the people. Opium suggests something soporific, numbing, dulling. Too often religion has been an aphrodisiac for horror, a Benzedrine for bestiality. At its best it has lifted spirits and raised spires. At its worst it has turned entire civilizations into cemeteries."

I rest my case.

The greatest act of faith is when a man decides that he is not God.

All religions die of but one disease, that of being found out.

One religion is as true as another.

There is not enough religion in the world even to destroy the world's religions.

The Importance of Being Atheist

It is unfashionable to be an atheist in an agnostic world. It is unfashionable to think at all for that matter, in this our New Age of freedom and enlightenment. But some of us are doomed to think for no other reason than we have been led to believe that truth is valuable. That is, we few poor wretches have been led to believe that *all* truth is valuable, and not only some truths. Why then should we not share our ghastly burden with others?

What is an atheist? An atheist is the mortal enemy of theists, agnostics, and "floaters". Theists believe in a traditional God, an agnostic maintains that it is impossible to know for sure whether a God exists or not, and a floater takes no position at all. Atheists alone are certain that it is impossible for a God to exist, and because they put more value on truth than do others they necessarily see all other views as destructive. To see the importance of being atheist we should first establish the truth of atheism and then establish the importance of being truthful. The importance of truth is one thing very few people have ever considered. To understand why it is impossible for a God to exist we need to understand what we mean by existence. The only sensible definition for existence is that a thing is said to exist if it relates in some way to some other thing. That is,

things exist *in relation* to each other. A thing must exist relative to an observer at the very least. Now, God is defined to be infinite, in which case it is not possible for there to be anything other than God because "infinite" is all-inclusive. But if there is nothing other than God then God cannot be said to exist for the reason just explained. God is simply another word for Nature, and Nature certainly does not "exist" - it just *is*.

It may then be argued in defense of the traditional God that there could be some manner of existence which is beyond our awareness. But no other manner of existence is possible, for the simple reason that we define what existence is, and it is logically impossible to have any other (sensible) definition than the one we have.

Having established the truth of atheism - and the impossibility of a God, it must then be asked "So what?" Indeed, what value is truth if it does not make life enjoyable? Well it does! I often find truth enjoyable. It is just a matter of approaching it with courage and humility, or with the courage of humility.

Everyone wants strength, freedom from fear, clarity, and permanence - only truth and reason can provide these things in any real way. That is, only atheism can provide one with a solid basis upon which concepts of what it is to be human can begin to form. And indeed it will be found that only the truly practicing atheist, free of God and of all Gods, living openly and with infinite understanding, can be called the truly human.

- Kevin Solway

Atheism: the vice of a few intelligent people.

Of Men and Machines

- A dialogue -

Q: It is impossible for a machine to possess life.

A: *You* are a machine that possesses life.

Q: But a machine cannot experience self-consciousness.

A: A machine can *believe* it is experiencing self consciousness, as you do.

Q: Are you saying that I only *believe* I have self consciousness?

A: Yes.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

Q: How can you know self consciousness is not real?

A: Because it is impossible for a self, or anything else for that matter, to exist inherently.

Q: Machines are wholly material, so how can they possess life?

A: *You* are wholly material and yet we say you possess life.

Q: I am not wholly material! I have a soul or a spirit, which purely material things do not.

A: What is this soul of yours? Show it to me!

Q: We cannot adequately describe much of our behaviour and experience in words; this is evidence of a spirit, or a soul that dwells within the body. Our scientific categories are not sufficient to deal with such spiritual truths, so I cannot show it to you as such.

A: We cannot adequately describe much of a computer's behaviour and experience in words. There are an infinite number of variables operating whenever we use a machine, so there is always unpredictability, and therefore "spirit" as you say.

Q: How can you say that? It is my experience that machines are totally predictable: it is this predictability that makes them different from us.

A: Can you predict with certainty whether your car will start in the morning?

Q: No, but machines always have definite causes for what they do. If a car fails to start in the morning, the engine may need new spark plugs.

A: *All* things have definite causes, though we may not be able to determine precisely what those causes are. Can you be certain that the problem with the car is worn spark plugs? If you replace the spark plugs and the car starts, can you be sure you have fixed the problem? You see, all things are the same, whether human or machine, in their inherent unpredictability.

Q: The difference between machines and humans is that in the case of machines there are only a limited number of possible reasons for failure. The problem with the car will be found in either the electrical system, or the fuel system.

A: Things have *infinite* causes because of the inter-connectedness of all things. There are however a finite number of *categories* of

causes, though each contain an infinite number of causes. The electrical and fuel systems are two such categories. A further category might be called "extraordinary causes," which would cover the possibility that aliens are directing a disabling beam at your car from outer space. Similarly, if a human being is faulty, the cause must lie within a limited number of categories of causes. For example, a cause must be either physical, mental or spiritual.

Q: But machines are man-made, and man-made things cannot possess life.

A: Are machines really man-made? I think you will find it is Nature that makes all machines, just as Nature has made us. Nature works through us and *as* us to do all that we do, including the making of machines.

Q: You have yet to convince me. If an exact robot copy was made of me, would *I* feel self-conscious in that robot?

A: If it was an exact copy of *you*, then it would sincerely believe it was *you*. What is more, it would question whether it was possible for *you* to possess life, as you are merely a machine, whilst it possesses spirit.

Q: Would such an intelligent machine experience emotions?

A: Just as you do.

Q: But my emotions are based on a whole lifetime of experiences, whereas the machine would have no past.

A: It is conceivable to program a machine to think it has had the same experiences as you. It is also conceivable, with suitable technology, to make an exact copy of your brain, with all its thoughts and memories intact. You seem to forget that *you* are a machine, and changing from moment to moment. You are therefore not the same machine for two consecutive moments. Each new "you" inherits memories and experiences from the old you. At any point in time you have no age at all, yet possess a lifetime of experience. As you see, age is no barrier to experience.

Q: This is serious! If we build machines that are as much alive as we are, then who are the real humans? These machines, whose brains are based on superior technology to our own brains, may even be able to think faster than us! They could be installed with enhanced senses, like eyes capable of telescopic or infra-red vision! And what about

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

reproduction? Will there be interbreeding between humans and robots? What is to stop these machines from out-competing the human race for food and resources and driving us to extinction?

A: Don't be so upset - change happens. Sometimes this change goes by the name of "evolution". If these "new humans" are truly superior to us, then why should we deny them? Anyway, this is not a new thing. Our very own human reproduction involves the production of new machines, who may well be superior to the parents, and who will eventually replace the parents. Do we not wish our children to be an improvement on ourselves?

Q: This is quite disappointing to me. I have always thought there was something sacred about the creation of a new life through the love of a man and a woman.

A: To create even the simplest of mechanical machines is a higher act than biological reproduction, for it is at least the result of a thought process, rather than blind chance and lust.

- Kevin Solway

For many, faith is a suitable substitute for knowledge,

as death is for a difficult life.

If there were a God, he would regard atheism

to be less of an insult than religion.

To the philosophic eye, the vices of the clergy

are far less dangerous than their virtues.

A theologian is like a blind person in a dark room searching

for a black cat which isn't there - and finding it!

Bishop Hollingworth Refuses Debate

Bishop Hollingworth, the politician of the Churches, has repeatedly refused to meet the Atheist Society in a public debate about the existence of God. He obviously thinks that politics is more important than truth. Public humiliation may be the only way to force him to lay his ignorance on the table for all to see, by meeting us in public debate.

Madness in Religion

Studies in the US suggest that Jehovah's Witnesses are more likely to be admitted to psychiatric hospitals than the general population. According to an article in the "British Journal of Psychiatry", they are three times more likely to be diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia and four times more likely to be paranoid schizophrenics. As a writer in the American journal "Free Inquiry" puts it: "Either the Jehovah's Witness sect tends to attract an excess of pre-psychotic individuals who may then break down, or else being a Jehovah's Witness is itself a stress that may precipitate psychosis. Possibly both of these factors operate together."

Bits of Adams

"God is a word that describes emptiness. It is the word given to an absence . . . of information, of comprehension, of answers. The idea of God grows in the way a balloon grows, a membrane inflated by ignorance."

"Marx called religion the opiate of the people, suggesting that it dulled the sensibilities. I don't agree with Karl. If religion is an opiate, it's in the sense that it's addictive, that people become religious junkies, needing more and more of a fix and suffering more tragically from withdrawal. You can never have enough of it and it never really satisfies."

"Overseas studies of meditation techniques, including Siddha, suggest that it's nothing more or less than a pretentious form of relaxation."

- Phillip Adams

Spiders of the Cross

(Be warned that what follows is motivated by an atheistic interpretation of the Bible.)

Christians are like spiders, who spin their sticky and tangled webs upon the cross, using it as a convenient support. Within a few years, the webs build up, until the cross is no longer visible - a dark and dirty shadow. Here the spiders lay in wait - to trap unsuspecting passers-by.

"Woe to you, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering." (Luke 11:52)

Just as a spider has no chance of ever fathoming the profound philosophic meaning of

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

the cross, nor does a Christian have the slightest hope. Such creatures are not even fit to be taught about spirituality, let alone practice it! They take every priceless gem of religious teaching and totally distort it to suit their own egos.

Christians claim to worship an infinite God, but they instead worship a finite one, and of their own making (either Jesus himself as God, or a grandfather figure, or some other necessarily limited conceptual form). To worship the finite in the name of the infinite is the worst kind of idolatry, and is truly using God's name in vain.

Are not Christians also like cannibals? - for they live by eating the man who died for them.

Christians not only use the teachings of Jesus as a crutch (or a stretcher) for their egos - they actually live off it. They make cunning and protracted plans to make the teachings their primary source of sustenance for the rest

of their lives. At least ordinary cannibals get the job over with quickly!

By masticating and macerating the valuable teachings of Jesus with their egos, they are in fact eating the body of Christ. Little did Jesus realize he was going to be cannibalized when he said to his apostles "this is my body given for you."

Jesus also said: "Where there is a corpse, there the vultures will gather."

Christianity, which came into the world as the truth men die for, has become the truth upon which they live.

- Kevin Solway

- No sooner had Jesus knocked over the dragon of superstition than Paul boldly set it on its legs again in the name of Jesus.

- I must believe in Apostolic succession, there being no other way of accounting for the descent of the Pope from Judas Iscariot.⁶⁶

Vol. 1 No. 2, Feb, 1993

Editorial

The world is infected with the New Age disease of uncertainty - shameful fuzziness. This issue discusses why certainty about reality is both possible and, in fact, absolutely essential, if we are to become human. There is nothing wrong with being fuzzy about the fuzzy, but one must be black and white about the black and white! The distinction between the fuzzy and the black and white is itself black and white - the reason for which is so simple that to give an account of it would need a far less brilliant pen than mine.

As well as superbly nutritious food for thinkers is included some helpful advice for our Christian sisters on how to become even less human.

Bewildered in an immense forest during the night, and having only one small torch for my guide, a stranger approaches and thus addresses me:- "Friend, blow out thy light, if thou wouldst make sure of the right path." This stranger was a priest.

What is an Atheist?

Atheism is easily the most misunderstood position of all. It is not a mere piece of dead

knowledge, but a living ideal. It is not the superficial rejection of religious gods in order to make life more pleasurable . . . nothing so common. Rather, it is the highest of philosophic goals, the goal which any truth-seeker of worth craves for with all his being.

Note this well: the atheist is *fundamentally* different to the rest of humanity. While the world pursues happiness, he pursues truth. He pushes reason to extremes, destroying all lies and fantasies along the way. He thinks: "Anything which is not quite true is completely false."

The atheist worships reality: Godless, thingless, selfless reality. He knows that the infinite alone is real and all else is unreal. Any type, or any shade of finiteness is rejected with force. Hence the atheist laughs uproariously at Christians and suchlike who vainly proclaim their petty little concepts to be the infinite truth.

Atheism is so noble, so high an ideal that few can realistically aspire to it. Just think of it. To reject *everything false!* Oh, how I tremble at the mere thought!

The Atheist exists in certainty. He knows exactly why there is no God, why Nature exists, and why there is no life after death. He

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

knows the nature of self and of consciousness, he understands life and death and the nature of egotism. His understanding is complete and beyond doubt.

So, please, if you entertain doubts about these issues, then do not call yourself an atheist. Be genuine, and say "I am currently an agnostic but my goal is atheism." In this way, you will not molest the highest.

- David Quinn

Christianity - A comedy of many parts -

It is always amusing to observe how the Christian deals with reason. He simply doesn't know what to do with it! He cannot reject it completely - even the dullest Christian knows that the absence of reason is the absence of sanity. But to embrace it fully is even worse! Unrestricted reason would undermine everything his happiness depends on.

Hence the Christian is the most dishonest of all creatures. He neither accepts nor rejects reason but continuously shifts his ground when confronted with each situation. One minute he thinks reason is necessary, the next irrelevant. His is the mind of a child: spontaneous and changeable, with no conscience whatsoever. And this, he tells us, is the truthful life.

The Christian cannot reject reason for he depends upon it in every aspect of his life. When he goes shopping, he uses reason. When he converses with his friends, he uses reason. As with everyone else, reason is required in all his conscious interactions with the world.

This applies no less to all his religious concerns. Reason is called upon in the adoption of a particular belief system, a particular scripture, a particular God-concept, or a particular ethical stance. In every way, Christianity is held together by reason.

Now it may be asked: does this not make Christianity *rational*? Not in the slightest, for the Christian uses reason only to provide himself with emotional security and a hope for the future. He does not use it to uncover truth. He reasons selectively and with great cunning, knowing deep down that happiness depends upon the dishonest use of reason.

Let us now look at specific examples of Christian thinking:

- It is said that God makes one happy. I have just experienced great happiness. *Therefore* God exists and I have just experienced Him.

or

- Jesus said he was God. Many other people say he is God and they can't all be wrong. *Therefore* Jesus is God.

or

- The Bible contains the word "God" a lot. When I read the Bible I have an uplifting experience. *Therefore* God is real and the Bible is His word.

or

- I used to be miserable with despair. But when I became a Christian my life changed to one of joy and hope. *Therefore* God exists and I am part of His plan.

And so it goes on. Pathetic isn't it? Yes, behind all their elaborate theologies, their ritual tears and emotional ecstasies, lie a few crude reasonings a ten-year-old child would be ashamed of.

And herein lies the comedy. For is there anything more humorous than to witness people building their lives on sand while believing it to be rock?

- David Quinn

"What was the first sin committed in this world? It was believing."

"The Freeman's Resolution" by William F. Denton

I will not bow to a titled knave,

Nor crouch to a lordly priest:

A martyr's torments I'd rather brave,

Than be of my manhood fleeced.

I'll bend my knee to no fancied god,

I'll fear no ghost so wan,

Erect and free I'll stand on the sod,

And act as becomes a man.

I'll pin my faith to no bigot's sleeve;

I'll swallow no griping creed;

I'll ask my Reason what to believe,

And ever her answer heed.

I'll hide no truth in a coward heart,

The world would be blest to know;

My boldest thought as it wills impart,

Nor check the mind's onward flow.

I'll love the true, I will do the right,

Ruled only by Reason's sway,

Let all do so; and the world's dark night

Will melt into rosy day.

Of Morals and Authority

The question "What is moral, and who decides?" has vexed humanity since time immemorial. Many have found an answer in submitting their will to *Ultimate Authorities* - I mean God, gods, and spouses etc, whose omnipotence (and often reality) go unquestioned and unchallenged. Those who believe suchlike I term theists. The atheist, however, having a greater regard for the reasoning process, cuts something of a lonely figure. The atheist knows with certainty, and for simple reasons, that there can be no greater authority than the human intellect in matters of morality and ethics. To escape this priceless knowledge requires nothing less than Houdini-like intellectual powers only possessed by theists. The average Christian, for instance, will name God as the authority for their personal morality. Yet their very belief that God exists is but a construct of their intellect. And so too is their conception of the nature of God; and so too their belief that Biblical scripture is divinely inspired; and so too their interpretation of scripture, and the morals, ethics and lifestyle which ensue from that interpretation. Indeed, the very notion that a higher authority than Man can exist, is itself a construct of the human intellect, which, in truth, elevates the intellect to its rightful position of Ultimate Authority. So the Christian defeats himself by his very thought, while remaining completely unaware that he has done so - a situation which, if it were not so tragic, would be exceedingly humorous.

The logic is simple and inescapable. It cannot be challenged by *reasonable* people, which is precisely why theists find the issue such a struggle. Theists desire influence over social morality, but shrink from the personal responsibility that such influence carries. Instead, they indulge in a fatuous game of metaphysical buck-passing, desperately constructing all manner of abstract and unsuspecting deities upon whom to project their "Will To Power".

One of the most important differences between the theist and the atheist is the latter's willingness to accept the reality of personal authority and responsibility. Does the atheist set himself up as the arbiter of human morality? Yes indeed! But then, so do we all. It's

just that some of us possess the intellectual integrity to acknowledge the fact, and some of us do not. For the true atheist, the revelation that He *is* God, is a truly terrifying one, and calls for a rare degree of courage. This is why the true atheist is, Himself, a decidedly rare breed.

- Dan Rowden

Exploding the Big Bang

If, when, and how the Big Bang happened is purely a matter of scientific interest, and is dangerously close to being of purely academic interest. Such knowledge has no bearing on philosophy, and on our ability to understand the fabric of reality, or who we are, and what we're doing here. Big Bang fervour is taking the place of religion, insofar as it satisfies the embarrassingly human yearning for power and mystery. In short, we don't need it.

How could knowledge of a Big Bang possibly tell us anything about a God, or what such a thing would be like? A God can be either finite or infinite. If this God is finite, then he is like us, and is therefore no God at all. But if he is infinite, that is, without limit, then God is just another name for Nature. There is nothing more to be known as far as God is concerned. Science can add nothing, and its application in such matters only serves to complicate the very simple.

Having dispensed with God, we are free to spend our time realizing what it means to be a part of Nature - the noblest of all pursuits.

- Kevin Solway

Does God have Free Will?

The problem of whether or not God has *free will* is actually a simple one, yet as important as it is compelling. It is clear to the rational thinker that this is a black and white issue. God either does or does not possess and exhibit free will - there are no alternatives.

Given that God apparently thinks and makes decisions, we must ask the question: How do such thoughts arise? Are they caused, or do they arise spontaneously? Again, it is clear that exactly one of these *must be* the case. If the latter proposition is true, and God's thoughts arise spontaneously, without cause, then his actions would be truly random, having no rhyme nor reason. Such a God would be a truly terrifying prospect -

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

and ultimately, not much of a God. If, however, thoughts are caused (which is clearly the case), then those thoughts are not truly "free" in the common sense of the term. They are necessarily predetermined, given that a thing pre-exists in its causes. This means that God's thoughts and decisions are predetermined, which implies a lack of control on God's part, and also points to the reality of a guiding force/principle beyond God's influence. In the face of this, the common perception of God as being omnipotent, omniscient, and all those other fancy "omni" words, is nonsensical. In other words, an *infinite* God, is impossible! There is in fact a name for this particular ultimate force/principle - CAUSALITY. Define causality as God if you will. But in doing so remember that causality is a conceptual principle and cannot be said to *exist* as such. Causality is just a word for the infinitely complex interdependence and interaction between things that do indeed exist. That which is responsible for existence itself cannot logically be said to exist.

Finally, one may rightly ask if the logic pertaining to God's inherent inability to possess "free will", also pertains to us humans? Again, the answer is actually quite simple. So much so in fact, that I shall leave it for you to ponder.

- Dan Rowden

"A man without religion is like a fish without a bicycle."

Advice for Christians, or How to protect your Faith

1. Ensure that your concept of God is so vague that nobody can know precisely what you are talking about.

2. Pay no attention to people who try to reason with you. Know that they are mere shysters out to deceive you.

3. If doubts arise in your mind, then make the God-concept even more vague. If possible, move God beyond the reaches of thought where He'll be safe.

4. If your beliefs seem to contradict one another, simply ignore the fact. Chant to yourself "God is infinitely mysterious" two hundred or so times.

5. Learn to fully submit to God. In this way, you can cease the irritating habit of thinking, and soon attain Peace.

6. Never cease to harden your beliefs. Otherwise, reality will begin to seep into your life and you'll be in real trouble. If you are having difficulties, go to church services on a more regular basis.

7. Take time to study the sciences. By doing so, you will be better able to distort and misrepresent them.

8. Do *not* read the Gospels too closely as you may find anomalies. If you do find a threatening passage, ignore it. If some unease remains, then go to your local preacher. His life is dedicated to your well-being.

9. Above all, do not think for yourself. If you do, your friends will leave you and you'll be alone. God does not approve of anti-social ways.

10. Listen to your feelings. If they are happy, then God is happy - for God created us to be happy, did he not?

Note: Do not hesitate to use violence, whether against a threatening thought or an evil atheist. God thoroughly approves the use of violence to protect the faith. Amen.

- David Quinn

The Dying Atheist, by Anon

*Now closed around the deepening shades
of death*

*And life with all its glory fades away,
Ere long those lips will yield the expiring
breath,*

And this worn frame be given to decay.

*Such is the lot of everything that lives,
From humble worm to intellectual man;
Thus fades the flower that freshening fragrance gives,
Thus all things end even as all things began.*

*'Tis folly to ignore the many links
Which bind all creatures in one vast embrace,
Yet human pride in righteous horror shrinks*

From owning kindred with the lower race.

*But as from germs doth spring all life around,
So man from nobler germs his being draws,
With all his genius - all his thoughts profound,*

*He yet must yield himself to Nature's laws.
Like frailest form of life that crawls the earth,*

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

*Man in his majesty must bow to fate,
And 'neath that ground which giveth all
things birth,
Return at last to his primordial state.*

*The question is not whether man descended
from the apes,
but when he's going to quit descending.
It isn't what people think that is important,
but the reason they think what they think.*

*The dissenter is every human being at those
moments
of his life when he resigns momentarily
from the herd
and thinks for himself.
Thought makes the whole dignity of man;
therefore endeavour
to think well, that is the only morality.⁶⁷*

Vol. 1 No. 3, June, 1993

Editorial

The God of Christianity is only one of many false Gods. Serious atheists do not believe in any of them, and that includes the God of Science. Yes, Science too is an imagined God, and has grown far beyond the meagre, yet extremely useful realities it can rightfully lay claim to. Science is certainly capable of more ... if only it will broaden its terms of reference to encompass Nature, instead of twaddling around with miniscule trivia as it does.

Indeed, the difference between Science and the study of Nature is truly infinite. The reason being that everything about Nature is infinite while everything about Science is finite. The problems start when foolish scientists (and which of them is not foolish?) try to make "infinite" fit into a scientific formula. For want of a more extreme expression this is like trying to force a square peg into a round hole - an infinitely large square peg into a very small round hole - which always makes the formula useless. Vainly taking the failure of their scientific formulas as a threat to their lives and livelihood, scientists have manifestly turned their backs on Nature, on the infinite, and on all that is true and great. This edition strives to put Science in perspective, in the hope that atheism will inspire the practice of a more noble form of Science.

*The object of modern science is to make all
aspects
of reality equally boring, so that no one will
be tempted
to think about them.
Science is the art of distancing yourself
from the Universe
by immersing yourself in it.*

Can Science be an adequate substitute for religion?

Yes, of course. There is no real conflict between science and religion. Both are fundamentally alike in that they have nothing whatsoever to do with ultimate truth. No matter how much they pretend otherwise, the ultimate reality of everything, that is *the infinite*, has as much to do with their tiny concepts (eg "God", "Law of Nature" etc) as does the vast Pacific Ocean to do with a tub of yoghurt in the fridge.

You see, it must be emphasized that science and religion were never designed to be concerned with ultimate truth. On the contrary, they have always been elaborate fictions created for the purpose of satisfying egotistical desire. Each excels in the art of manipulating Nature for the all-too-cunning aim of securing physical and emotional benefits. One example alone is sufficient to illustrate how science is nothing less than ultimate myth. Cosmologists proclaim that they are on to something BIG - that is, THE ORIGIN. Now, if cosmology is to replace philosophy, as it thoughtlessly claims to do, then its purpose should be to uncover *the origin of Nature* - that is, of utterly everything - and not just of this tiny bubble of a universe we happen to be located in. Yet the moment this is attempted they fall into eternal absurdity, for it is simply not possible for THE ORIGIN to exist.

From my observations, I can only conclude that scientists do all they can to avoid the glaring fact that the whole subject is by nature scientifically incomprehensible ... There are two basic scenarios confronting the scientific mind: 1. Nature stretching endlessly back into its past, and 2. Nature spontaneous-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ly popping into existence out of nothing whatsoever. No other scenarios are possible: Nature is either beginningless or not. Both are completely inexplicable as far as science is concerned, and will continue to be so forever more.

Thus, in one pure stroke of reason, the whole science of cosmology is discredited.

It has to be seen that the scientific quest to understand the ORIGIN is inherently self-defeating. Science *needs* a "starting point" upon which to formulate their GREAT EXPLANATION; a universe going back forever will never be captured by formulas and equations and the like. Yet a starting point is, by its very definition, *none other* than the point at which Nature pops into existence completely uncaused. Since the very basis of all scientific explanation is the notion of cause and effect, a starting point is by necessity completely inexplicable. So you see, in order to understand the origin of Nature, Science depends on something it cannot comprehend.

The scientists themselves half-understand this dilemma: they invent all sorts of nonsensical concepts like "imaginary time" and "beginningless beginnings" in the hope that the problem will somehow go away. Neither can religion offer any help here, and for the same reasons. You see, the concept of God is completely irrelevant to the origin of Nature. A God, if it were to exist, would necessarily be a part of Nature (because Nature is defined as "utterly everything") and thus can play no role whatever in resolving the problem of THE ORIGIN. It is almost degrading for me to write these thoughts because it tends to imply that science and religion possess a degree of philosophic credibility, which they certainly do not have. No, happiness is their game, and the philosophic concept is just one of the many means to this end. Science and religion remind me of two warehouses trying to outbid each other in their search for customers. They lure the customer in and provide him with every possible happiness. All he has to do is lie.

- David Quinn

Science seeks generally only the most useful systems of classification:

these it regards for the time being, until more useful

classifications are invented as true.

Science is always wrong - it never solves a problem without creating ten more.

Bits of Nietzsche - On Scholars -

They are clever, they have cunning fingers; what hath my simplicity to do with their multiplicity?

Their fingers know well how to thread and knit and weave: thus they knit stockings of the mind! They work like millstones, and corn crushers - if grain be thrown into them! They know but too well how to grind corn and make white dust thereof.

They watch one another well, and trust not one another over- much. Ingenious in petty stratagems, they lie in wait for those whose knowledge goeth on lame feet; like spiders they wait.

They know, moreover how to play with loaded dice. We are as strangers to one another, and their virtues are yet more repugnant to me than their falsehoods and loaded dice.

They love not to hear that any goeth over their heads. Therefore they have laid wood and earth and refuse betwixt me and their heads.

Thus have they deadened the sound of my footsteps; and hitherto the most learned have heard me least.

For men are *not* equal: so speaketh justice. And that which I will, they cannot will!

Beware of scholars! They hate you; for they are sterile! They have cold, dried-up eyes, and in their sight every bird lieth plucked. Such men boast that they lie not: but impotence for lying is far other than love of truth. Beware!

Freedom from fevers delusions is far other than knowledge! I credit naught from frozen minds. He that cannot lie, knoweth not what is truth.

Of "cultured men"

"We are altogether real and without beliefs or superstitions." Thus ye puff yourselves up. But how could ye believe, ye motley ones - ye that are compound pictures of all that hath ever been believed.

A Comedy of Errors

Consider the following:

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

1. Sub-atomic particles come into existence completely uncaused.

2. The observer is necessary for a particle's existence.

Believe it or not, these are two basic tenets of modern quantum theory. That they contradict one another is ignored by all who preach the "new physics". Can we really take scientists seriously if they believe that an observer is a necessary cause of an uncaused particle?

Contradictions of this sort are rampant in all science. Indeed, it seems an immutable law that progress in science is dependent upon philosophical backwardness. At the very least, their philosophical spokespeople are imbeciles.

To illustrate this important point, let us look closer at the quantum physicist. Determinism is dead, he says in essence, because subatomic particles keep deviating strangely from predictable paths (e.g. individual particles cannot be accurately followed, various properties cannot always be predicted with certainty, etc, etc) Unfortunately, however much the physicist wants to evade it, the fact remains that however strange the sub-atomic realm might be, it can *never* provide proof *nor even evidence* that particles arise uncaused. This is simply because things can be inherently unpredictable and yet still be caused. On the other hand, a completely uncaused event is by necessity a *completely unpredictable event*. Thus, it follows that if sub-atomic events really occur without cause, then no mathematical tool whatsoever would be able to make meaningful predictions concerning them. Yes, even the "very effective" equations of quantum physics would be useless.

It does not matter if scientific experiments have revealed that on the smallest scale individual particles display random and unpredictable patterns of behaviour. Quantum theory is able to make meaningful predictions about these very same particles, albeit statistical predictions concerning large numbers of them. This would be impossible if the particles and their behaviour were uncaused. Besides, although individual particles display random, unpredictable movements, the whole method of scientifically observing them is based on the prediction that the said particles will be there to observe, and not, say, armchairs or elephants. In other

words, the very fact that the same old particles keep arising, complete with the same old recognizable properties, *proves* that these particles cannot be uncaused. Non-causality is non-discriminatory, and it has the entire infinite range of possible forms for it to randomly choose from.

Now, what of the modern physicist who believes in uncaused particles? How does he spend his time? It is staggering but true: this self-same scientist devotes his entire life to refining the very effective and predictive powers of quantum physics!

Enormously humorous though this is, it doesn't stop here. Not content with half-measures, the physicist aims to push his comic madness to rarified heights. How does he attempt to persuade us of the existence of uncaused particles? By *stressing the effectiveness of quantum physics*. Magnificent!

- David Quinn

Science is 10,000 years behind philosophy; theology is 10,000 years behind that.

Science: the prostitute we turn to when religion has V.D.

What do you mean there are not enough women in Science

... there are no men!

Selection pressure in Science: survival of the witless.

Bathroom Activities

The goal of science and religion is *not* to understand the nature of ultimate reality. Their basic pleasure, rather, is to transform Nature into a gigantic soap opera. It is the delight of children to envelope themselves in warm bedtime stories.

The scientific view of Nature's history may have a bit more plausibility than the religious ones, yet is identical in that its purpose is to invent useful descriptions of what causes what. This is infinitely removed from the goal of philosophy, which is to understand the nature of cause and effect itself.

Cause and effect is the underlying principle of Nature. All things come into existence and disappear again in accordance with the dictates of the eternal process. Even the most exotic of scientific processes and the most elevated of divine activities (assuming they exist) are composed of plain old cause and

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

effect. Take physics, for example. One of its stated goals is the discovery of "fundamental laws" which govern all of Nature's processes. This, they naively assert, would be the ultimate knowledge - "The mind of God" they brag.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Suppose these laws really exist (ie, outside our minds), then they would either be in a causal relationship to the rest of Nature or not. If not, then they would not be able to fulfil their function, namely to cause changes. On the other hand, if they do exist in causal relationship, then one immediately sees that the concept of cause and effect is more fundamental than the concepts of "law" or "matter". Or, for that matter, "God" or "Intelligence". Thus the gods of science and religion are refuted on the grounds of irrelevancy. As far as ultimate reality is concerned, science and religion masturbate distractedly.

It is this realization which forms the first faint patches of light heralding the bright new dawn of atheism.

- David Quinn

So close . . . but so far

Philosophers and theologians have a remarkable command of the English language. They can articulate on subjects of extreme complexity and difficulty with ease. Yet this is hardly surprising, given the degree to which they have devoted their lives to the enterprise. Indeed they *need* to devote their lives *without reserve* if they are to avoid a confrontation with the absolute.

Their rationality has placed them in the proximity of truth; now they do all they can to avoid it by taking their knowledge to an extreme. They become experts at hedging around the truth and procrastination. They cannot see the forest for the trees; but this is exactly the way they want it - so they have taken it upon themselves to plant countless trees, trees with all manner of impressive and difficult names - as a safeguard. You see, proximity to truth is not to be confused with closeness, for if you are even a hairsbreadth away, you are a million miles.

It is as though these scholars journeyed to the end of the earth, and on encountering the Void, a barrier they cannot pass, they decided to set up camp. Shortly, the camps became many, and eventually grew into vast and

complex cities. Consequently these scholars are experts on the small patch of terrain, there at the end of the earth, but have never ventured beyond it - into the Infinite.

If they meet a true man of the Void, they speak enthusiastically to him of their world and lives, but he finds it difficult to follow their speech, for he only glanced their world in passing.

- Kevin Solway

QUANTUM PHYSICS - A PROBLEM CHILD -

A few decades ago, pregnant by the seed of reductionism, Science gave birth to a strapping young theory - a baby they called "Quantum Physics". Those present at the happy event rejoiced; theologians, theosophists of the New Age and priestly scientists alike. But sadly, wisdom was not invited. 'Twas a handsome babe, full of the promise of understanding and the hope of a better world. What excited anticipation lingered in the air! But, just as children in this world are often corrupted by the adults who seek influence over them, so has Quantum Physics been corrupted by the self-seeking, self-ordained "Godparents" present at its birth. Now it's the rational among us who seek *deliverance* from what this innocent child has become. Now it's the insightful few who see this child as the grotesque nursery into which it has grown - an arrogant and cunning youth which proclaims itself to be the oracle for ultimate principles. It says: "Feed me with your desires, your fears, and I'll keep your imaginings safe within my mystery! Worship me and I'll give you Chaos, Spontaneity, Randomness, Uncertainty - I'll return your beliefs to you tenfold!" Thus I give you the Devil's puberty.

Well versed, is this Teenager from Hell, in the art of legerdemain, conjuring all manner of phenomena from its vast sleeves of ignorance, making great impressions upon the gullible and credulous. "This is magic!" they gasp, "how does he do it? We cannot see the cause, and he claims there is none, surely then spontaneity is real, surely things do happen *without cause*, truly there *is* magic - what a relief!"

But, just as a Magician never reveals the secrets of his tricks, nor do the physicists, for to do so would surely spoil the fun. So the

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

Mendacious Merlin invites you to check his sleeves, his pockets, every part of his body; he asks: "What have you found? What is the cause of this trick and that trick?" How he loves to confound. But I tell you, you may search him for a thousand years and never find the cause of a single one of his tricks, all the while missing the obvious, the logical. Does not a magical trick require a magician? Can a trick exist of itself? Is not the Magician the *cause* of the magic? Indeed, can there be a *magician* without *tricks*? Understand this one point, and a thousand others will accord-

ingly grow clear; misunderstand that one and ten thousand delusions will encompass you. All things are caused, for there must be something which is not that thing to give it meaning; to denote it as a thing; to be conscious of it, that is, to give it its *existence*.

Physicists never speak of "causes" in this way, for this would give the game away! Never let it be said however that scientists are foolish, for it requires enormous mental dexterity to feign such ignorance.⁶⁸

- Dan Rowden

Vol. 1 No. 4, Feb, 1994

Editorial

To avoid any criticism that we atheists do not pay enough attention to women, this entire issue is dedicated to them. Indeed, every true Atheist is concerned primarily with WOMAN, for there is no God greater than Her, none more powerful, none the cause of more self-sacrifice, none more dehumanizing.

WOMAN is, and always has been, the single greatest enemy of truth and rational thought. The very fact that it is inconceivable to even suggest such a thing nowadays bears testimony to the fact that WOMAN is the controlling force behind men almost as much as it defines every woman's existence.

Religion itself is but an expression of WOMAN. Christianity no longer worships a hard, masculine, dignified God, but idolizes a weak and effeminate Jesus of its own creation. Buddhism no longer reveres Enlightenment, non-attachment, and liberation, but promotes a sickly and pathetic form of "compassion". Islam: sheep.

Religion is an illusory foe, and to fight against it is to box with the empty air. Religion does not exist in a church or in a set of ideas or beliefs, but in WOMAN. That is, it exists in a fanciful imagination that has no connection whatsoever with reality. WOMAN is a pre-conscious entity that is unable to place any value at all on such things as truth, reason, integrity, and principles. It is unable to do so because it has not been designed for the task. Only if WOMAN evolves into something more, much more, can we ever demand truth of Her, and Her many religions. Please try to understand the importance of

what is being communicated here. It is said that women should not be criticized because they are a Natural Force, and beyond criticism. But if Natural Forces are allowed to run rampant, there is great destruction. It is not man which is the cause of so much violence in this world, but the WOMAN in man. Were it not for Her, reason and truth would reign supreme. A "balance" between the masculine and the feminine is always ninety percent in favour of the feminine. Do not settle for part measures! It is not possible to say enough about women in just this one issue, so be prepared for much more in future. In order to convey the greatest amount of information in the smallest possible space, I leave you with a collection of Oh so masculine sayings and aphorisms. I am aware that many men will be upset by this attack on women, but I simply don't believe that sex is worth paying for.

- Woman wishes to wish away the differences between the sexes. - but then, that is the nature of woman.

- Some men are different. All women are alike.

- For story and experience tell us, That man grows old and women jealous; Both would their little ends secure: He sighs for freedom, she for power. His wishes tend abroad to roam. And her's, to domineer at home.

- She is like a stone on the hilltop, difficult to be moved. Yet when she is once started she goeth fast and far; no man knoweth her end. She believeth that ALL men are vain and easy to be flattered. Her heart is older than her head; yea, her emotion is the mother of

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

her reason. She desireth many things, and she is happy till she getteth them. TWO things she holdeth dear, mystery and mastery.

- Why is it we never hear of a self-made woman?

- Woman submits to her fate; man makes his.

- Men think what they will do in the world, and women think what they will have out of it.

- Men are worried about how many years they have left, women how many they have had.

- God made woman beautiful and foolish; beautiful, that man might love her; and foolish, that she might love him.

- There are two kinds of women: those who wish to marry, and those who haven't the slightest intention not to.

- To a single woman men are either dates, potential dates, or date substitutes.

- There's only one way to get on for a woman, and that's to please men. That is what women think men are for.

- A woman's place is in the mall.

- Men say knowledge is power; women think dress is power.

- Woman's first duty is to her dressmaker. What the second duty is no one has yet discovered.

- There are few women whose worth lasts longer than their beauty.

- Woman strives for loveliness, man for dignity.

- Beauty is the wisdom of women. Wisdom is the beauty of men.

- Many women would swap brains for beauty and think they were getting the best of the bargain.

- The average girl would rather have beauty than brains because she knows that the average man can see much better than he can think.

- "After men, monkeys have the most intelligence," says an author. Others will argue that women do.

- Smart men are smarter than they look; smart women look smarter than they are.

- The heart is the whole of women, who are guided by nothing else: and it has so much to say, even with men ... that it triumphs in every struggle with the understanding.

- A young lady who thinks is like a young man who rouses.

- To find fault with a woman's intellect you must first find her intellect.

- Women have simple tastes. They can get pleasure out of the conversation of children in arms and men in love.

- A man, conceivably, could adjust to the knowledge that he was at a higher level than those around him, although no rational man could possibly enjoy that perspective; but to a woman it would be unbearable.

- Essentially feminine, she was able to chatter but say nothing, ask questions and require no reply.

- Women can write more interestingly than men on the really important topics of civilization: dress, food and furniture.

- She wavers, she hesitates; in a word, she is a woman.

- Woman's one notable invention: Perpetual emotion.

- Women are always eagerly on the lookout for any emotion.

- Women: picturesque protests against the mere existence of common sense.

- A woman's hopes are woven of sunbeams; a shadow annihilates them.

- No wonder women live longer than men - look how long they remain girls.

- You bring up your girls to be ornaments and then complain of their frivolity.

- When he has a thorn in his side, she has to have a sword through her heart.

- A woman will always sacrifice herself if given the opportunity; it is her favourite form of self-indulgence.

- Of what use is independence to a woman, if she is - all alone?

- If the parasite woman on the couch, the plaything and amusement of men, be the permanent and final manifestation of female human life on the planet, then that couch is also the death-bed of human evolution.

- Democracy is woman's greatest invention. Indeed, it even reflects her character: purposeless, irrational, subject to public opinion and passing fashions, rambling, confused, underhanded, scheming, in love with its own purity.

- To be a woman is something so strange, so confusing and so complicated that only a woman could put up with it and, what is worse, feel happy about it.

- Woman: a biped with two hands, two feet, two breasts, two eyes and two faces.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

- A woman has three reasons for everything she does: the reason she says she has, the reason she thinks she has, and the reason she really has.

- I will not say that women have no character, rather, they have a new one every day.

- I've never met a man of good character who has had anything to do with a woman.

- A man of straw is worth a woman of gold.

- A woman never forgets her sex. She would rather talk with a man than an angel, any day.

- Between a woman's "yes" and "no" there is no room for the point of a needle.

- Her husband's funeral is often where a widow looks for the next man.

- Woman's virtue is man's greatest invention.

- I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where the immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not pure; her whiteness is illusory. - John Milton

- Indiscretion: the guilt of woman.

- A woman sometimes feels pity for the sorrows that she causes with out remorse.

- No matter how much a woman loved a man, it would still give her a glow to see him commit suicide for her.

- A woman rarely discards one lover until she is sure of another.

- Where neither love nor hatred is in the game a woman is a mediocre player.

- If all men told the truth the tears of women would create another flood.

- It is sometimes argued that women have a hard enough time in this world, without telling them the truth.

- A man who won't lie to a woman has very little consideration for her feelings.

- The formation of a young lady's mind and character usually consists in telling her lies.

- What is conscience to a wife? ... To marry is to domesticate the Recording Angel.

- With a man, a lie is a last resort; with women, it's First Aid.

- Women are not half as sensitive about their sins as about their follies.

- Women always speak the truth, but not the whole truth.

- Most women think that truth is an irrelevant triviality whose only role in life is as a stumbling block for men.

- A man with a bad heart has been sometimes saved by a strong head; but a corrupt woman is lost forever.

- Revenge is always the delight of a little weak and petty mind; of which you may straightway draw proof from this, that no one so rejoices in revenge as a woman.

- The one thing that man never gives to a woman is spiritual help.

- The souls of women are so small, that some believe they've none at all.

- Is it not better to fall into the hands of a murderer than into the dreams of a lustful woman?

- Women have no moral sense; they rely for their behaviour upon the men they love.

- God created woman. And boredom did indeed cease from that moment - but many other things ceased as well. Woman was God's second mistake.

- It has often been claimed that God is a woman, but to my knowledge no-one has ever claimed that the Devil is a woman and really meant it. So I will.

- Men are women's playthings; woman is the Devil's.

- Women give themselves to God when the Devil wants nothing more to do with them.

- Women are not necessarily evil - but evil is necessarily feminine.

- Where the Devil cannot go himself he sends an old woman.

- Woman - last at the cross, earliest at the grave.

- Mothers, wives, and maids; these are the tools wherewith priests manage men.

- Woman: the hand that rules the cradle rocks the world.

- Women learn how to hate in the degree that they forget how to charm.

- Friendship among women is but a suspension of hostilities.

- Misogynist: a man who hates women as much as women hate one another.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

- No man is as anti-feminist as the really feminine woman.

- Women and people of low birth are very hard to deal with. If you are friendly with them, they get out of hand, and if you keep your distance, they resent it. - Confucius

- Woman is a domesticated animal; the feminist has returned to the wild. The goddess has gone wandering, collecting a few bruises, developing a few survival traits. She is lost; the bed beckons her. She will soon return.

- When men and women agree, it is only in their conclusions; their reasons are always different.

- Man's conclusions are reached by toil. Woman arrives at the same by sympathy.

- A woman can believe anything in the world if there's no good reason for it.

- Can you recall a woman who ever showed you with pride her library?

- Women never reason, and therefore are (comparatively) seldom wrong.

- Womens' intuition is the result of millions of years of not thinking.

- Women have a wonderful instinct about things. They can discover everything except the obvious.

- No woman, plain or pretty, has any common sense at all. Common sense is the privilege of our sex and we men are so self-sacrificing that we never use it.

- Women would rather be right than reasonable.

- It took a million years to develop man's reason, but it takes only a few minutes of feminine logic to destroy it.⁶⁹

Vol. 1 No. 5, April, 1995

Editorial

Continuing from the last issue, we again address the most dangerous and destructive of all Gods - the Woman in all.

To consciously set about to destroy an enemy is one thing, for there is at least some controlling force. But to unconsciously destroy ... as Nature in its wrath ... as a virulent plague ... this is the most harmful of harms, because it draws no distinction between the good and the bad, the true and the false, the just and the unjust. It knows no limits, but lays all to waste beneath its crushing feet. It is a mindless harm that continues long after every last single thing is destroyed and forgotten.

So is woman an unconscious and mindless destroyer of ideas. She is like a child who playfully squashes the butterflies which innocently venture into her garden. She is utterly unaffected by the news that this exquisite butterfly is close to extinction, because a child neither comprehends "extinction" nor the value of existence.

When woman dismisses "male" intellectual discrimination she comprehends neither intellectual discrimination nor the lack of it. So discrimination dies, reason dies, truth dies, consciousness dies ... I die. For I am that fragile, beautiful, and rare butterfly, and ever will I defend myself against forces of Nature

who would destroy me in their unconsciousness.

As to "equality of rights", I question whether woman's right to unconsciously destroy reason, truth, and consciousness, is the equal of my right to uphold those very things. If woman cannot bear the burden of a conscious existence, if she cannot exist without reason and truth being squeezed out to make room for her, then I must ask the question: DO WOMEN HAVE A RIGHT TO EXIST?

The destruction of a just and noble idea is infinitely more harmful than the destruction of a person, or a people. We have laws for murder and manslaughter, but what of ideas? What of truth? What value is life without truth? ... at least, for a thinking person?

ATHEISTIC OBSERVATIONS

I

Studies have shown that up to 98% of women dare not make advances to a member of the opposite sex. A woman would rather let the opportunity of meeting a man she fancies slip by than go through the ordeal of initiating relations with him.

In other words, for the sake of that which a woman regards as the most important thing in this world - namely, a satisfying relationship - she is not prepared to take any substantive

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

risk. She is willing only to wear a pretty dress and to otherwise look aloof.

Now what does this say about the character of women?

II

The essential premise of all feminism is that throughout human history men have systematically oppressed women, often violently so, and that this is a situation which must be changed. Men, it says, should develop the courage to change their ways so that women can live their lives as they please, and not as men dictate. In other words, both sexes should be treated as equals.

That this entire premise is nothing other than a complete load of bollocks can be amply demonstrated, and I will proceed to do so forthwith, using the issue of sexual harassment as an example. The whole area of sexual harassment is an issue which nicely illustrates the real and actual interplay between the sexes and consequently illustrates the sheer nonsense which continually passes for feminist thought.

It is stated often enough by feminists that women should have the right to dress as they please and that men should be able to control themselves - the idea being that men are alone responsible for all violence against women. Now, I ask you, what is this but a classic case of feminine logic, designed to avoid all responsibility and consequences? I mean, let's not beat about the bush here - does not a woman dress in order to affect the male mind? Of course she does! Does she not deliberately spruce herself up so as to tease and titillate and generally stir up the male hormonal impulses? What else! O, how she loves to arouse a man's passion! How she loves to transform a robust man into putty with but a single glance of her eye or a gentle swish of her dress. Small wonder, then, when her plans backfire!

Oh yes, it is often said that women should have the right to behave as they please and men should be able to control themselves. But do women really want men to control themselves? That is the crucial question. I say not. You see, women want men to lose their cool and their sense of perspective - oh yes indeed! - but only when they themselves happen to be the master and engineer of this loss. When this occurs, then all of the things

that are usually labelled "harassment" - the stares, sexual innuendoes, sly touches, and even rape - magically cease to be harassment and instead become the foundations of a passionate new romance. Hence, woman really does not want the "sexual abuse" to stop. Indeed, what could she despise more than a man who is completely indifferent to her? Rather, her complaint is: "Man should know when it is right to harass me, and when it is not." His real crime is that of being too stupid to read her everchanging whims.

Depending on her mood, a man is either an exciting and courageous hero - or a horrible monster intent on tyranny and abuse.

All of this goes to the heart of why feminism is so utterly nonsensical. Feminism states that men should treat women as equals and with respect. Yet nothing gives a woman a greater pleasure than to have the right man come along and sweep her off her feet. This requires a man to take risks, to intrude, to make advances, to harass. I mean, he will only disappoint women if he does not.

Look at it closely. Basically, women want to have their cake and eat it. They want to live as freely as possible, unshackled by the restrictions imposed by ethical considerations, yet at the same time they want men to shoulder the blame for anything that happens to go wrong. Indeed, as far as women are concerned, this is precisely what men are for - to take on the burden of creating an earthly feminine paradise, where women do as they please and men cop the flak for making it all possible.

Feminism is all about promoting this state of affairs and little else. Its only real concern is the creation of endless fun for women, and all this talk of "equality" and "justice" is just a sort of ruse which only men are idiotic enough to fall for.

III

What does woman's liberation mean? Does it mean liberation from all delusion? Does it mean freeing oneself from the limitations of false thinking? Does it mean escaping the bondage of ignorance? What about making every effort to eliminate the ego? Or opening up one's whole being to the infinite truth? Or vowing never to mislead a fellow human being? Or does it mean never resting until achieving boundless perfection?

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Somehow, I do not feel this is what women mean by liberation. Yet unless women adopt these goals (which are goals of genuine liberation) then how on earth can I treat their feminist movement with any kind of sympathy at all?

IV

By far and away the biggest tragedy of our times, and one which provokes little or no response in people, is the steady erosion of the masculine from the world. Nowhere else in the annals of history has the male spirit been so derided, mocked, jeered at, and otherwise kicked into unconsciousness by grinning, smirking women loudly proclaiming their newly-awakened sexuality and their so-called inalienable rights.

What a horrible state of affairs! It makes me break out into a sweat just thinking about it. Consider what has happened. All of the values which used to be called "noble" - namely, suffering for the truth, sticking to one's principles, uncovering ultimate knowledge, dedicating one's life to overcoming evil, etc - have been completely abandoned.

Women, you see, don't believe in them. Such things are the products of a diseased mind, they feel, or what comes to much the same thing it seems, the outmoded values of male logic.

Men, ever eager to oblige, have said "Sure honey, whatever you say honey" and have promptly given these great and noble values the almighty flick.

And for what? So that women can experience many lovers and have lots of orgasms? So that they can be prime minister or be an executive with lots of money? I mean to say, is this what it's all come down to? I could understand it if women sought to replace the old values with something even better and more noble, but this?

The really sad thing about it all is the incredible lack of resistance put up by men. From all appearances, the masculine spirit has well and truly been broken. Men no longer believe in anything anymore; as a result, they can see nothing better to do with their lives than to submit to whatever women say. Not so long ago, a man was judged by his ability to live up to an ethical ideal; nowa-

days, he is considered worthy if he is able to shower women with houses, cars, and hugs.

There are no frontiers any more, it seems, either physical or philosophical. The entire planet has been conquered and cemented. The masculine love of exploration can no longer be properly exercised. There is no longer any real purpose to anything.

Science works to make everything relative. Ultimate knowledge is not worth chasing anymore. Men have lost faith in their powers of reason. The masculine spirit is dying.

This is the root cause of feminism, nothing else. I mean, if men were to suddenly decide tomorrow to take away all the freedoms that have been granted women over the last century, there wouldn't be a lot women could do about it. Any rights women have are theirs by the grace of men - or as is the case in this century, by the pathetic fall of men.

Men no longer see the worth of being masculine. Virtually everything they do is greeted with howls of protest by women. Feminism has successfully brainwashed men into believing that their very existence is oppressive and hurtful to women. And as we all know, women are experts at making men feel guilty.

What a sham! For thousands of years, men have literally sacrificed their lives to the cause of creating this wonderful civilisation of ours so that everyone, women included, can blossom and flower in a safe and luxurious environment and thereby explore their inner feelings, articulate their deepest motivations, buy the latest fashions, drive their father's cars, and talk intimately with lovers on skiing holidays.

You see, what is usually forgotten in this enlightened age of ours is that the essential underpinning of all women's lives, the fundamental factor which enables them to have "choices" and "options" and "rights", is man. It is he who stands between her and the untamed forces of Nature; it is he who provides the cocoon in which she is free to play.

Wherever I go in this world of ours, I see women everywhere grinning from ear to ear in sheer enjoyment of their lives. How they revel in their man-made cars and their man-made clothes and talk into their man-made telephones and caress their woman-made men! And this, feminists keep telling us, is a male patriarchal society which thrives on the oppression of women!

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

Indeed, if men have a fault, it is that they have done almost too good a job of it. Twentieth century life in the West is almost too safe, too orderly, too predictable, and too luxurious. The physically life-threatening situations, such a regular feature of existence in years gone by, have all but vanished. Very rarely nowadays is the male called upon to protect the female from the proverbial wild animal; consequently, he is come to be regarded as redundant, superfluous, expendable - nay, tyrannical, violent and oppressive.

Men have created an aimless, materialistic society which women love and find great pleasure in. Women, ungrateful as always, have subsequently turned around and, with loud whoops and screams of delight, proceeded to give men thumping kicks in the groin.

Women and Overpopulation

No, I am not about to suggest that ridding ourselves of women would solve the overpopulation problem (though it would), but I will discuss woman's central part in what is the most destructive phenomenon this planet has ever experienced.

It is true that if we people made more intelligent use of the earth's resources, the earth could very likely support a reasonably large human population. Unfortunately we people are not intelligent enough ... and we don't look like becoming intelligent enough, at least for the next few hundred years. What is more, there is evidence everywhere that we are, as a race, growing dangerously less intelligent. Therefore our problem, and our problem now, is too many people ... too much breeding. Yet, breeding requires both sexes, so why do I say that woman is the central part of the overpopulation problem?

Judging by her own behaviour, woman's sole interest in life is sex and procreation. By "sex" I mean anything that might lead to procreation, namely the emotional life, which is but the interplay of the passive and the aggressive, the dominant and the submissive, the sexual forces. By procreation I mean breeding.

It is always women who want the children, while men merely accede. Woman believes it

is her right as a woman to mother children, and feels incomplete if this is denied her. Men too, are interested in sex, but men are interested in much else as besides. Much else. Importantly, men have little interest in bringing ever more children into this world. Men have children of many species, all of their own.

The simple truth is, the world is overpopulated because women want babies.

It may be objected that I am treating women as though they are capable of thought, responsibility, and will, and therefore proceeding on wrong grounds. Additionally, it could be put that responsibility for all things must lie with the consciousness that conceives of those very things - that is, with men.

It is true that I treat women as they are not. I treat women as they could be. Am I then cruel?

Women are either conscious, responsible beings, or not. If women have potential to be only partly conscious, then they must be regarded as only partly human. On the other hand, if women have potential for the same level of consciousness as men, they should be expected to think and do as men, and to bear the full burden of responsibility for all they do.

So, do women have the potential for consciousness or not? ... Let us treat women as they could be ... and see what happens. Call it a scientific experiment.

"A psychological proof that the power of making judgments is a masculine trait lies in the fact that the woman recognises it as such, and that it acts on her as a tertiary sexual character of the male. A woman always expects definite convictions in a man, and appropriates them; she has no understanding of indecision in a man. She always expects a man to talk, and a man's speech is to her a sign of his manliness. It is true that woman has the gift of speech, but she has not the art of talking; she converses (flirts) or chatters, but she does not talk. She is most dangerous, however, when she is dumb, for men are only too inclined to take her quiescence for silence." - Otto Weininger

Woman is generally so bad that the difference between a good and a bad woman scarcely exists.⁷⁰

THE THINKING MAN’S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

CORRESPONDENCE WITH PHILLIP ADAMS

1993-1994

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Introduction

Phillip Adams has made himself a part of the scenery here in Australia by contributing weekly columns to a leading "high-brow" newspaper, as well as hosting ABC Radio National's Late Night Live (supposedly an intellectual chat show) most nights of the week. He presents himself as Australia's Knight of Reason in the battle against religion and new age nonsense.[†]

In our push for publicity, and material to write about, we offered him honorary membership to *The Atheist Society of Australia*. I sincerely thought that once we explained our case to him, he would see reason, reach certainty, and become at least a bit of a philosopher. But I was mistaken. I soon realised that his association with us would make us a laughing stock. The ties had to be cut completely, and without delay ...⁷¹

From: Kevin Solway, To: Phillip Adams

19th July, 1993

Dear Phillip,

Watching "Face the Press" recently forced me to consider that perhaps your association with this Atheist Society is not justified. Are you agnostic or what? Certainly, the small degree of respect you showed to Birch was infinitely more than he deserved. Someone who claims to know that "God has changed since the Big Bang" and then shortly follows this incredible statement by saying that "for something to have value it must be permanent" has no right to call himself a human being. I understand that Birch can make a fool of himself without your help, but no one I know would tolerate such an imbecile for a moment.

Through popular demand the next issue of "The Atheist" will aim to establish your credentials as an atheist. We make no excuse for being fanatical about reason and truth. Only the Birches of this world believe that "ideas cannot be proven".

Phillip, are you an Atheist or a Birch? A or B?

* Solway: "Letters and Essays of Phillip Adams used by permission."

† Phillip Adams appeared on a T.V talk program with Templeton Prize (for progress in religion) winner Charles Birch.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

If you wish to defend yourself then you are welcome to do so, because, to be honest, we are having trouble finding anything genuinely atheistic about you (given our lofty conception of what it is to be an atheist).

How about having Dan Rowden and myself on your program to explain why it is impossible for a God to exist? Dan and I would be happy to make the journey to Sydney to appear on your program. We are both in our thirties and I think you would find us to be quite articulate on these matters.⁷²

Remember the next issue: "Adams: Man or Mouse?"

Regards,

Kevin Solway

From: Phillip Adams, To: Kevin Solway

10 August 1993

Dear Kevin,

Given your growing concern about my credentials as an atheist, I hereby resign as a patron of your Atheist Society. God forbid that I should hang around when I'm not wanted.

I've spent a life-time attacking religious beliefs and have not wavered from a view of the universe that many would regard as bleak. Namely, that it is a meaningless place devoid of deity.

However I'm unwilling simply to repeat the old arguments of the past when, in fact, God is a moving target and is taking all sorts of new shapes and forms. The arguments used against the long bow are not particularly useful when debating nuclear weapons, and the simple arguments against the old model gods are not sufficient when dealing with the likes of Davies et al.

For example, the notion that God didn't exist, doesn't exist but may come into existence through the spread of consciousness throughout the universe is too clever to be pooh-poohed along Bertrand Russell lines. And if I had the time I could give you half a dozen other scientific theologies that will need snappier footwork from the atheist of the future.

Birch is, in my view, a pretentious fart whose philosophies are opportunistic and unconvincing. If people can't see that, that's their problem. In the context of a hydra-headed SBS interview, one hopes that he hoists himself on his own petard.

Incidentally, if there's one thing more infuriating than a silly theologian it's an arid, doctrinaire atheist. I've had dealings with plenty of them over the years, including a famous monster from the US. To profess atheism is not to prove anything, let alone intellectual merit. Some of the narrowest, most dogmatic and silly people I've known have been atheists - or have loudly professed themselves Humanists or Rationalists.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

Let the last contribution of your erstwhile patron be to warn you against intellectual arrogance. I've never believed, for a moment, that atheists have all the answers. Just that they pose better questions.⁷³

Cheers,

Phillip Adams

"Eclectic Genius of the Sorcerer of Science"

By Phillip Adams

The Weekend Australian, July 31, 1993

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James Randi, Aka The Amazing Randi, magician and escapologist, has been staying with me. When he wasn't amusing us with re-enactments of the Uri Geller repertoire (psychic spoon bending etc) he'd regale us with anecdotes about his friends - the likes of Carl Sagan, the late Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke.

However, the best yarns concerned someone who's been described as "the most brilliant, iconoclastic, and influential physicist of modern times". Such was his combination of genius and eccentricity that a group of fellow scientists were moved to hold a half-serious debate on the question "Is he human?"

His name was Richard Phillips Feynman, and he liked James Randi to instruct him in magic and conjuring.

To teach Feynman how to pull rabbits from hats was to take coals to Newcastle, given that he shared responsibility for the greatest conjuring trick of all time. He helped turn a few equations on a blackboard into the atomic bomb.

As the mathematician Mark Kac wrote: "There are two kinds of genius: the 'ordinary' and the 'magicians'. An ordinary genius is a fellow whom you and I would be just as good as, if we were only many times better. There is no mystery as to how his mind works. Once we understand what they've done, we feel certain that we, too, could have done it. It is different with the magicians. Even after we understand what they have done it is completely dark. Richard Feynman is a magician of the highest calibre."

Feynman liked to turn up at a dinner party and, during the course of the evening, ask a couple of women guests to search the host's library. They were to secretly select a book and read a page of it together. During this time Feynman would be out of the room and earshot, only allowed back when the book had been returned to the shelf. Whereupon Feynman would star intently at the umpteen spines, invariably discovering the chosen book and the selected page.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Though Randi is universally admired by the scientific community for his ability to see through the likes of Geller and other "paranormal" charlatans, he couldn't work out how Feynman was doing it. Finally Feynman confessed. He'd choose the women wearing the heaviest perfumes who, in turn, would invariably choose a book that was out of the way, on a high shelf or a low one. And because they'd been asked to read a selected page in it entirely, their combination of Chanel, Dior or what-have-you left its impression. Feynman had taught himself the olfactory skills of a bloodhound.

Mind you, he was always amusing himself with improbable tasks. As his biographer James Gleick remembers: "While dreamily wondering how to harness atomic power for rockets, he worked out a nuclear reactor thrust motor, not quite practical but still plausible enough to be seized by the government, patented, and immediately buried under an official secrecy order." With no less diligence he taught himself how to train dogs to do counter-intuitive tricks, and learnt how to make columns of ants march to his bidding.

Feynman was centre stage in physics for 40 years. He stood astride the science of the post-war era like a colossus. Although his early work would infuriate the likes of Niels Bohr, and trouble Einstein, it would win him a Nobel Prize - specifically for remaking the theory of quantum electrodynamics. His colleagues, however, felt he deserved at least three others - for his theories on superfluidity, a theory of "weak interactions" and a theory of partons, hypothetical hard particles inside the atom's nucleus.

"No other physicist since Einstein so ecumenically accepted the challenge of all nature's riddles," writes Gleick.

Inevitably and unfortunately one of these riddles involved nuclear power, and J. Robert Oppenheimer would privately concede that Feynman was the most brilliant physicist in his team at Los Alamos, the most highly powered brains trust in history.

Feynman couldn't be contained within a single scientific discipline. He had an alarming habit of wandering into the laboratory or office of a distinguished colleague who'd been working in another realm of scientific inquiry, and asking them what they were up to. No sooner had the scientist begun to explain what he'd been grappling with for the last 10 or 20 years than Feynman would hush him. "Have you ever thought of trying this?" he'd say, prior to wandering off. More often than not, the scientist would be slack-jawed with astonishment, at once awed and humiliated.

Feynman's final TV appearance involved one such insight. The Challenger spacecraft had exploded and NASA couldn't begin to explain why. At a crowded press conference, Feynman sat among the obfuscating NASA heavies conspicuously toying with a rubbery O-ring. At one point he dropped it into a glass of iced water. When it was his turn to talk, he didn't.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

He simply extracted the ring and dropped it on the desk. It shattered. It had taken Feynman only hours to deduce that frozen O-rings had caused the tragedy. The gathered media were both astonished and impressed.

I urge you to read James Gleick's book, simply and appropriately entitled *Genius*. His account of Feynman's peripatetic life is enchanting.

"Feynman was a gadfly, a rake, a clown and a naif," writes Gleick. "At the atomic bomb project he was the thorn in the side of the military censor . . . He was the enemy of pomp, convention, quackery and hypocrisy. He was the boy who saw the emperor with no clothes."

Alternating between fascinating accounts of Feynman's scientific work and his eccentricities, the quirks as well as quarks, it reveals that Feynman regarded the likes of philosophers as third-rate thinkers, that he didn't look at paintings, didn't listen to music, didn't read books, even scientific ones. Yet, he never ceased playing with ideas.

"He experimented for months on end with trying to observe his unravelling stream of consciousness at the point of falling asleep . . . experimented with inducing out-of-body hallucinations in a sensory deprivation tank, with and without marijuana . . . taught himself the tricks of mental arithmetic, having long since mastered the more arcane arts of mental differentiation and integration . . . how to keep track of time in his head . . . to make impromptu xylophones by filling water glasses." While working on the atomic bomb, he'd request "to learn how to defeat the iron clamp of an old fashioned soda machine, how to pick Yale locks, and then how to open safes".

"He taught himself how to mimic foreign languages, mostly a matter of confidence, he found, combined with a relaxed willingness to let lips and tongue make silly sounds . . . He taught himself to make perfect free-hand circles on the blackboard. Knowing nothing about music, he bet his girlfriend that he could teach himself to play one piece, 'The Flight of the Bumblebee', and for once failed dismally."

Having taught himself how to write Chinese, he also learnt "how to discourage autograph seekers and refuse lecturing invitations, how to hide from colleagues with administrative requests, how to force everything from his fields of vision except for his research problems of the moment, how to hold off the special terrors of ageing that shadow scientists . . . then how to live with cancer, and how to surrender to it."

Yet in his entire life he couldn't teach himself to tell the difference between right and left, relying on an observation of his mum's that he had a mole on the back of his left hand. He always had to check for the mole when he wanted to be sure.

In Feynman, James Gleick has a marvellous subject. In Gleick, Feynman has an admirable biographer, better at explaining Feynman than Feynman. (The scientist gave accounts of himself in books like "Surely

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

"You're Joking, Mr Feynman" and "What Do You Care What Other People Think", best-sellers in the 80's)

Of those who are scientifically literate, few can explain the whirling ideas of chaos theory and quantum mechanics to a lay audience, and those who can are frequently blind to the importance of idiosyncrasy. Gleick rejoices in Feynman's humour but, as well, knows when to be serious. And he also knows a fine aphorism when he sees one, noting that Feynman would labour over his for hours, so that he could astonish students with their apparent spontaneity at subsequent lectures:

"Nature uses only the longest threads to weave her patterns, so each small piece of her fabric reveals the organization of the entire tapestry."

"Do not keep saying to yourself, if you can possibly avoid it, 'But how can it be like that?' because you will get 'down the drain' into a blind alley from which nobody has yet escaped. Nobody knows how it can be like that."

Gleick also records a sort of haiku found on the last page of Feynman's olive-green dime-store address book, used mostly for the phone numbers of women (the scientist became a desperate womaniser, who claimed to have developed a foolproof method of picking up women in bars).

"Principles. You can't say A is made of B or vice versa. All mass is interaction."

"Why is the world the way it is? Why is science the way it is? How do we discover new rules for the flowering complexity around us?" Gleick asks. "Are we reaching towards nature's simple heart, or are we merely peeling away layers of an infinitely deep onion? Although he sometimes retreated to a stance of pure practicality, Feynman gave answers to these questions, philosophical and unscientific though he knew they were."

People would ask Feynman whether he was looking for the ultimate laws of physics. "No, I'm not," he'd reply, "if it turns out there is a simple ultimate law which explains everything, so be it - that would be very nice to discover. If it turns out it's like an onion with millions of layers - then that's the way it is."

And Feynman said something that reflects my own deepest convictions. Something that encapsulates my entire belief system. (Or is it a disbelief system?) "I don't have to know an answer, I don't feel frightened by not knowing things, by being lost in a mysterious universe without any purpose, which is the way it really is as far as I can tell. It doesn't frighten me."

When Feynman died many colleagues tried to define his contribution, to write his epitaph. One colleague, a pre- eminent rival, chose these words. "An honest man, the outstanding intuitionist of our age, and a prime example of what may lie in store for anyone who dares to follow the beat of a different drum." I prefer, however, Gleick's summary: "The science he

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

helped create was like nothing that had come before. It rose as his culture's most powerful achievement, even if it sometimes sent physicists down the narrowing branches of an increasingly obscure tunnel. When Feynman was gone, he had left behind - perhaps his chief legacy - a lesson in what it meant to know something in this most uncertain of centuries."

He certainly knew how to die. Feynman's last words were magnificent. Briefly surfacing from unconsciousness he said: "I'd hate to die twice. It's so boring."⁷⁴

From: David Quinn, To: Phillip Adams

5 September 1993

An Analysis of the Wisdom of Richard Feynman, for the Edification and Entertainment of Philip Adams (Who, it is hoped, will give the subject disclosed the serious attention it deserves.)

Text for the Day:

"I don't have to know an answer. I don't feel frightened by not knowing things, by being lost in a mysterious universe without any purpose, which is the way it really is as far as I can tell. It doesn't frighten me."

Thus spake Richard Feynman. Surely a fitting view from such a brilliant scientist. But what is more, this short paragraph neatly encapsulates everything about the man: his fundamental world-view, his psychology, his loves, his lifestyle. Indeed, it more than adequately serves my own purpose, which is to investigate the question: Was Richard Feynman, acclaimed physicist and eclectic genius, a man of wisdom?

True, many have sung his praises. Philip Adams heads a long list of eminent people who have spoken out in admiration for the man. And who am I to fault their reverence? The life of Richard Feynman makes impressive reading: he was an outstanding physicist who was instrumental in the creation of the atomic bomb; he was one of the powerhouses in the development of modern physical theory; he regularly astounded his colleagues with quick and original solutions in a whole variety of scientific disciplines; his talents spilled over into the non-scientific world where he learnt to draw perfect circles on blackboards, taught dogs counter-intuitive tricks, perfected the art of seducing women, and a whole lot more. Without doubt, here is a man who possessed that rare combination of great talent and prodigious energy. Yet the question still remains. Did Feynman possess wisdom?

In my view, this is the one question of importance and I direct it to each and everyone, including those held in high regard. Especially to those held

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

in high regard. For it is precisely with these acclaimed geniuses, saints, and philosophers that the risk of deception is at its greatest. As a lover of truth, I make it my business to study these people meticulously. So I ask again: Did Feynman comprehend reality or not? Did he spend his life in serious pursuit of this comprehension? Or did he do what he could to escape the issue?

But first, wisdom must be defined. It is nothing other than the complete understanding of ultimate truth. It is the possession of that rock-solid certainty which naturally comes with pushing reason fully, to the very end.

Did Richard Feynman possess this certainty? Let's look at his fundamental view of the world. It can be summarized as follows: "At bottom, all knowledge grasped by the human mind is inherently uncertain. Or to put it more succinctly, ultimate truth is unknowable. Furthermore, it is more or less irrelevant to human life. Any conceivable ANSWER would have to come in the form of an equation, or a set of laws, or some other form of intellectual conception, and as such could play no significant role in the emotional life of mankind. In short, it is all a bit academic, more so considering that the existence of an ANSWER is doubtful, owing to the uncertainty of all human knowledge."

Funnily enough, this view is not unique to Feynman. It is held by many an esteemed person. So many esteemed people, in fact, that one could fairly say it forms the very linchpin of the entire culture of the modern age. Yes, from all corners of the globe, philosophers and scientists are implicitly and explicitly spending their time preaching this great doctrine on a daily basis. (Even Christians adhere to it. One can regard their fantastic theologies as bizarre attempts to escape their innermost conviction, namely that everything is uncertain.)

It follows that if Feynman was truly a man of wisdom, then the world is in very very good hands indeed. Our humble little world must be literally infested with sages. So many sages that one could almost be forgiven for thinking that they are bred like rabbits. With so much wisdom about, mankind's long-term survival and well-being is assured.

There is, however, one tiny flaw to this beatific vision, and it is this: The doctrine upon which all these sages place their trust is composed of an inherent contradiction. If the highest wisdom is defined as knowledge of ultimate truth, and if this ultimate truth consists of "the unknowability of ultimate truth", then what?

It is time to be direct. Is the doctrine "Everything is uncertain/Ultimate truth is unknowable" the ultimate truth or not? If it isn't, then the doctrine is meaningless. If, on the other hand, it is the ultimate truth then the contradiction involved makes it equally meaningless.

If one looks carefully into it, one sees that the doctrine of uncertainty rests on many a certainty. For example, the belief that there exists an objec-

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

tive reality, that things really do exist in their own right, that Truth should be contained in human concepts and symbols, that the empirical scientific method is the only valid means of ascertaining truth, that Truth must necessarily be complex and therefore be beyond our finite thought processes, that Truth should even refer to something real that can be known or unknown, and so on. Let it be known that I take issue with all these "certainties" and upon investigation have found them wanting.

Nowhere is this better illustrated than in something Feynman uttered in the Text for the Day: "I don't have to know an answer. I don't feel frightened by not knowing things, by being lost in a mysterious universe without any purpose, which is the way it really is as far as I can tell." Note the "as far as I can tell." These six words dramatically expose the man's mind. For me, it simply confirms what I already knew, namely that Feynman lacked the character and mental capabilities to have even an inkling of what the ultimate is all about.

It is obvious that Feynman was steeped in the common delusion that Nature must either have purpose or else it must lack purpose. In other words, he couldn't conceive of the alternative.

It is very easy to see how Nature cannot have purpose. This is because Nature (ie, utterly everything) is infinite. It has no beginning or end in any shape or form. But what must also be seen is that the idea of Nature being purposeless is equally false. Nature cannot lack what cannot possibly exist. Purposes or lack of them belong to the realm of the finite - it is meaningless to apply them to the infinite.

Not only did Feynman fail to grasp this essential point but he went on to assume that the issue can be resolved one way or the other on the basis of some form of irrefutable evidence. In other words, he created the whole idea of "purpose" out of his imagination and projected it out onto the world. Then he attempted to resolve the resultant dilemma (of Nature's seeming lack of purpose) by looking outwards for empirical evidence! What is this but insanity.

Imagine if a God were to suddenly descend upon us and declare that he created our world for a purpose, and suppose He backed his claim with irrefutable evidence - would this decide the question of whether Nature (i.e. utterly everything) possessed purpose or not? Not a bit! As far as infinity is concerned, it would have about as much significance as a human declaring he made his breakfast for a purpose.

Or suppose it were found that Nature possessed universal consciousness (whatever that means) and that this consciousness directed all events in accordance with its purpose - would this have any bearing on the question of whether or not Nature possessed purpose? Not a bit! For all processes in Nature, including those we term conscious, are composed of a deeper reality, namely cause and effect. And cause and effect, which is

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

infinite, has nothing to do with purpose or the lack of it. (These thoughts apply to all forms of God or Consciousness, even the modern "sophisticated" versions of evolving deities.)

In short, all empirical methods of deciding the issue are of no use, as are all the various theological constructs. As far as ultimate reality is concerned, the gods of science and religion merely masturbate distractedly.

One needs a particular type of mind to grasp the significance of what is being said here. Richard Feynman didn't have it, and he therefore pictured the universe as purposeless and bleak. But then, look into it more deeply, his view formed a necessary basis for the structure of his entire life - a life of manifold pleasures and purposes. He was more than content to rest in his philosophical bleakness, I assure you.

After reading what I have just written, I see that I could be accused of acting in bad faith. After all, I have been criticizing a man who hasn't been given the opportunity of defending himself. I admit this to be the case, and in deference to it I will allow Feynman to have the final say:

"Well, I have been listening to David's spiel with only half an ear and that which I did hear didn't impress me. Just the usual outpourings from a third-rate thinker whose sole intention seems to be to make himself appear ridiculous. I mean, I would be an object of ridicule if I were to go up to my bank manager, for example, and criticize him for failing to win Wimbledon. He would only laugh incredulously and say, "But good sir, I have never even stepped onto a tennis court, let alone strived for top honours in the sport. Your criticism is meaningless to me." And since my bank manager is a decent sort of a guy, he would dismiss my barb with a wave of his hand, putting it down to a momentary loss of normal functioning. This is how I would like to regard David.

"If only he would stop pontificating and actually begin to look at what he is saying! Otherwise, if he continues in this vein and fails to realize the insanity of his position, then all he will do is make himself appear ridiculous.

"What he simply fails to understand is that I have no interest at all in this so-called ultimate truth of his. It is completely irrelevant to me. I tell you, my life and happiness have never hinged on the presence or absence of the "ANSWER". As such, I cannot be accused of failing to be a man of wisdom.

"Yes, it is true I did study philosophy in my time, but not, as David supposes, for the dubious purpose of discovering some great philosophical truth. No, there is a far more noble cause which philosophy can serve, one for which I believe philosophy was specifically designed, and one which I myself have dedicated my life to. What is this noble cause? The preservation and promotion of ignorance.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

"I realized very early on in life that my interests would be best served with the elimination of all wisdom from the world. If you were honest with yourself, David, you would find it to be in your interests too.

"Just reflect a moment on how life would be if we were to discover the ultimate secret of everything. It would be horrible! All of life's mystery gone in a flash! No longer could we satisfy our emotional need to worship something greater than ourselves. How could we go on regarding Nature with awe if we just strip Her bare and expose Her secret? No, if we humans wish to lead a full and happy life, it is better to keep our distance and respect Her privacy.

"Reflect a moment on what would be destroyed if wisdom were to appear in this world. There would be no more cosmic challenges for our great minds to overcome! It would spell the end of the road for physics, I bet. Philosophy too, for that matter. What a great disservice this would be to our children, and to our children's children. The joys of great intellectual purpose and yearning for higher things would be denied them.

"And what of those exquisite pleasures involved in consoling one another over the helplessness of mankind? Gone! How could we bond together in the face of this bleak and meaningless universe if it were discovered the universe was not so bleak and meaningless after all? At the very least, it would become a lot more difficult to wail and gnash teeth with our friends! Our poetry, our music, indeed the romantic image of Nature would be severely undermined. One could go on and on, but it is enough to say that everything we value as human beings would be placed in jeopardy by the uncovering of Truth.

"It is clear, then, that if a person wishes to serve mankind to the best of his ability, he should endeavour to do everything he can to stop people becoming wise. He should regard wisdom as he would a killer virus, which must be eliminated completely. Otherwise, it will run rampant and begin to infect our conscience. Ours would be a bleak future, I tell you, if that happens. It would be pointless to continue living.

"But do not despair! This may never happen, especially with so many gifted people on our side. They are in the thick of it, day after day, all of them dedicated to ensuring victory in the holy war of Ignorance vs. Wisdom.

"You know, I'm not usually given to sounding my own trumpet, but I can fairly and with good conscience say that I have done everything in my powers to further the cause of our blessed ignorance. And considering my great talents and prodigious energies, it can be assumed I was no minor bit player in this cosmic drama. No, indeed! I lead from the front and was an inspiration to all men!

"If you do not believe me, then just look at my life! Now tell me, did I waste time in serious pursuit of the highest wisdom? Did I endeavour to

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

apply my great talents to honest enquiry, pushing it as far as it can go? Did I strive to eliminate every shred of delusion from my brain? I dare you to find anything of the sort, my friends, for it would only come to naught. I'm as pure as they come. I served the cause of mankind's happiness well. Everyone who knows me well, knows this. They know I spent my time creating atomic bombs, teaching myself party tricks, drawing perfect circles, seducing women and the like. They know I was a shining example of how to live a responsible life. Oh, I loved to play games and shock people with my unconventional behaviour, but no-one ever doubted my heart was in the right place. Frankly, I deserved all the accolades showered upon me.

"And do not forget I also spent many years teaching the young. Thousands of young gifted students, I'm proud to say, gave up all forms of philosophical idealism because of me. Yes, I did my bit to impress upon them the uncertainty of everything and the bleakness of our purposeless existence. I made sure they lost themselves in the meaningless complexities of academia. No stone was left unturned in my efforts to ensure their lives were devoted to the glories of nonsense and trivia. Watching my students, especially the exceptional ones, develop into mature responsible human beings gave me a source of satisfaction almost unequalled elsewhere in my professional life. And what is more, I did it all with wit and style.

"It may be thought a young person would become disenchanted with the prospect of a meaningless universe and fall into deep despair. In my experience, however, this almost never happens. And why should it? There is so much for these young people to look forward to: career, marriage, children, hobbies, friends - the list is virtually endless. In truth, they can look forward to a life stuffed with so many purposes that they'll come to be glad at the thought of life's purposelessness, if only for a breather. And when, finally, they secure everything they need and want, and life is but a steady stream of pleasurable experiences, they will be able to say, with perfect sincerity, that Nature's bleakness and uncertainty doesn't frighten them in the least. I warn you though, only a lifetime spent absorbed in countless distractions can give one the strength to say this, and mean it.

"Obviously, it is important that everyone be given every opportunity to develop this strength. More to the point, it is vital that as few as possible escape our sophisticated and cunning indoctrination, and it is vital that we marginalize those few who do. Here we can never thank our forefathers enough. It was they who devised all those timeless philosophical and emotional tricks so good at bringing down the potential thinker. It was they who taught us how to make a lie seem like a truth and a truth seem like a lie, and to be able to do all this effortlessly, without a moment's thought. If there exists any young misfit who has turned away and started thinking for himself, he will very quickly learn the whole world is against him. His every movement will be made redundant. Wherever he goes, he will be

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

branded a misguided dried-up humourless fanatic who is too immature to appreciate the full complexities of life. His truths will be made null and void. Our world is safe.

"Let me conclude by repeating those timeless words from our holy scripture. May everyone everywhere continue to engrave them onto their hearts, and so ensure a happy future for all mankind:

*I don't have to know an answer. I don't feel frightened by not knowing things, by being lost in a mysterious universe without any purpose, which is the way it really is as far as I can tell. It doesn't frighten me.*⁷⁵

From: Phillip Adams, To: David Quinn

16 September 1993

Dear David,

Thank you for allowing me to eavesdrop on your little chat with the late Richard Feynman. But I'm afraid you lost me early in the piece when you defined wisdom. "It is nothing other than the complete understanding of ultimate truth."

Really? Well, that eliminates everyone from contention. Except, of course, for the odd fool who thinks that he or she possesses the aforementioned "complete understanding". If I wanted to define wisdom, which I most emphatically do not, I'd probably begin by inverting your definition. I'd see wisdom as having something to do with accepting that no understanding can be complete, any more than any truth could be ultimate.

If I wanted to define wisdom, which would be as fatuous and pointless an exercise as defining, for example, love, I'd probably suggest that wisdom is about knowing what you don't know. All my life I've bumped into idiots who profess certainties - for example, in the realms of political or religious fundamentalism. What I find attractive about Feynman is his happy acknowledgement of his and our species' limitations.

Incidentally, you spelt his name wrongly. And mine.

"As a lover of truth," you write, "I make it my business to study these people meticulously." Not meticulously enough, David Quinn.

Some of your ideas are amusing and deftly expressed. But, David, there's an underlying smugness in the way you write that worries me - and should worry you. The longer I live the less I know. In my experience, certainty diminishes just as dogmas disintegrate. I find that exhilarating.

Try it some time.⁷⁶

Cheers,

Phillip Adams

From: David Quinn, To: Phillip Adams

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

17 October 1993

Dear Phillip,

"If I wanted to define wisdom, which would be as fatuous and pointless an exercise as defining, for example, love, I'd probably suggest that wisdom is about knowing what you don't know".

The whole point of *defining* anything at all is so that we can do something constructive with our time. Concepts are the tools we rely on to act in this world. If I want to do some philosophical work, then I need concepts - more specifically, I need concepts with precise meanings. That is, I need to *define*.

We can't escape this, Phillip. In order to form any conclusions about wisdom, or love, or whatever, we are required to provide these terms with good working definitions. Even the purpose of trying *not* to define wisdom, for example, is only made possible by the mind entertaining some notion of what wisdom means. Otherwise, such a purpose would be incomprehensible. One wouldn't have the faintest idea why wisdom should not be defined.

I, David Quinn, define wisdom to be "nothing less than the complete understanding of ultimate reality". The question then is: Is wisdom, as defined by David Quinn, possible to the human mind? I say "Yes", Phillip Adams says "No".

Now, Phillip, I ask you. Are you *certain* of this "No"? Have you got to the very bottom of all existence such that you can positively and unequivocally say that ultimate knowledge is impossible? You know you haven't! Your own philosophical standpoint admits as much. Then why on earth do you automatically dismiss anyone who claims such knowledge?

My only concern is with a man who easily possesses the brains to understand reality, but who seems to lack those elements of character needed to make the required steps. For some reason, Phillip, you seem to switch off whenever thought starts to get a little serious. I mean, you've obviously uncovered some minor truths: for example, the ever-changing nature of a society's truths, the constant flux of belief-systems and moralities, the relativity and uncertainty of all knowledge, and so on. But when it comes to following up the *logical implications* of these truths, your brain inevitably decides to short-circuit.

Let me repeat my essential philosophy and, please, this time do me the honour of making an effort to understand it.

It is true that all scientific/empirical knowledge is inherently uncertain. Any knowledge which relies on evidence is open to doubt. Even the seemingly unshakable theories of inertia, thermodynamics, evolution, etc could easily be overturned by the uncovering of new evidence.

It is equally certain that science will *never* establish anything of ultimate significance. This is simply because any explanation it could devise

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

to account for anything at all will itself require explanation. Physicists could spend eternity conjuring up the most exotic and sublime formulations, and yet for all this they would not come one whit closer to the ultimate.

The same applies to *all* theology, for the very same reasons. It all comes down to trying to stuff the infinite into the finite - it just cannot be done.

In your letter, you asked me to try your philosophy of uncertainty and Socratic ignorance some time. Phillip, the uncertainty of all concepts, formulae, explanations, philosophical constructs, etc is something I realized a long time ago. Indeed, it was through serious reflection upon this very truth which led me to the highest wisdom! If only you would look!

Why is everything uncertain? Because everything is subject to change. And this, in turn, is because a thing's existence is utterly dependent on things other than itself. In other words, a thing cannot truly exist in its own right. It is only when the mind isolates some phenomena with the view of trying to establish certainty, that uncertainty immediately arises.

By now, you will have grasped how impregnable my position is. Nothing can undermine it precisely because *I hold no position whatsoever*. Or to put it another way, my position is that all positions are untenable as they necessarily rest on the false concept of "existence".

This is wisdom. Socrates went around proclaiming that he knew nothing. How infinitely sublime was his ignorance! How wise he was! How wise! This is far removed from "the older I get, the less I know". In truth, Phillip, your mind possesses too many certainties to appreciate this.⁷⁷

Kind regards,
David

From: Kevin Solway, To: Phillip Adams

October 7, 1993

Dear Phillip,

Just to let you know that we received your resignation from our Society.

We are a small group of probably the finest intellectuals alive today. Certainly, we have not heard of anyone living whose thoughts approach the clarity, depth and power of our own. Neither have we ever met or heard of atheists who think even remotely the way we do.

Australian intellectual mediocrity, of which you are a mouthpiece, is something we are determined to spurn. We are united in our determination to set an example for young people everywhere, and we will never compromise with the herd, be it the Australian herd or any other.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

You are determined to look in the other direction as far as our ideas are concerned. Someone has to tell you. None of us has any idea of how you might have seen a similarity between our arguments and those of Bertrand Russell, or how you are able to imagine a God that falls outside the scope of our basic argument, which disposes of both finite and infinite Gods. You must have been trying very hard.

God must be either finite or infinite. If God is finite, then he is like us (limited) and not all-powerful - in which case he isn't really God. The only alternative is that God is infinite, in which case God is absolutely everything, or in other words Nature - which again does not fit *any* of the Gods that people like to believe in. Now what is all this drivel about a "clever" God who is coming into existence through the spread of consciousness throughout the universe? Do you really think that such a God falls outside the scope of our argument?

You may believe the task of an atheist is only to "ask questions" but I have discovered that if you ask the *right* questions you get **ANSWERS**. Has this notion ever occurred to you? Have *you* ever asked the question whether there is a difference between empirical truths and purely logical truths? Empirical truths are always uncertain, but purely logical truths, which are independent of measurement and observation, can be deduced with certainty. The truth that it is impossible for a God to exist is a purely logical truth, independent of measurement and observation.

You warn us against intellectual arrogance, but I would say that the greatest arrogance of modern times, while not intellectual in the slightest, is the narrow-minded and cowardly certainty of the herd that all knowledge is uncertain.

I believe that one of my colleagues wrote to you recently about Richard Feynman. Feynman is popular among academic insects precisely because he was too cowardly to ask the obvious questions. He is a shining example of the mediocrity I despise - mediocrity with a dash of pepper, mediocrity with "wisdom" and women. I wouldn't judge him so harshly if he showed some tendency towards the ideal of honesty - but there is no trace of such a thing to be found in him - he didn't even try.

I hope you are not so sure of yourself after reading this letter.⁷⁸

Kevin Solway

From: Phillip Adams, To: Kevin Solway

10 August 1993

Dear Kevin Solway,

First you ask me to be the patron of the Atheist Society. Now you reveal that, all along, you've regarded me as "the mouthpiece of Australian intellectual mediocrity". This doesn't say much for your ethical standards.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

Indeed, anyone reading our correspondence might feel that you're just a tad hypocritical.

But that's the least of your problems. You're also breathtakingly arrogant. So I shall take solace by paraphrasing Groucho Marx. "I wouldn't want to be the patron of a society that would have me for a patron." Particularly if Kevin Solway is its progenitor.

Mind you, to be condemned by Solway puts you in good company. So Richard Feynman is "popular among academic insects precisely because he was too cowardly to ask the obvious questions". So Feynman is "a shining example" of the mediocrity you "despise".

Kevin, I'm never sure of myself. Never have been, never will be, never want to be. That's the essential difference between you and me. You have revealed yourself, not for the first time, to be a rigid, dogmatic little shit.⁷⁹

Yours sincerely,

Phillip Adams

From: Myles Thresher, To: Phillip Adams

Dear Phillip,

After reading some of the heated letters between yourself and Messrs Kevin Solway and David Quinn of the Atheist Society, I have been inspired to enter the fray with the enclosed dialogue.

It is clear you are becoming annoyed with the antics of the Atheist Society, but I would urge you to pay serious attention to the arguments and not get emotional.

I find it ironic that one moment you say 'you are never sure of yourself', then the next you are sure enough of yourself to say that Kevin is a 'dogmatic, little shit.'

Anyway, enjoy my modest effort at outlining what I perceive as your philosophy and its contradictions.⁸⁰

Adieu!

Myles Thresher

Socrates V Adams: "The Question of Smugness"

Socrates: "Phillip, in your correspondence with brother David, one of the few true atheists of your era, and a kindred spirit of mine, you accuse him of smugness, inferring that he has not spoken the Truth. Such a claim, I trust, is not unfounded, and must surely be the fruit of your own intellectual labor. If this be the case, might I trouble you for an explanation, so that my ignorance and brother David's may be swiftly dispelled? Ignorance is no small matter, do you not agree?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Phillip: "Yes, of course, Socrates, ignorance is indeed no trifling matter. Over the years it has been the cause of too much violence and far too many wars. It has also been the nadir of cultural progress. But as to David's smugness, I say this because he writes with a certainty and strength of conviction that I find irritating. He is like one of those arid, doctrinaire fundamentalists: anally retentive and about as inspiring as John Hewson's aesthetic taste. David's smugness worries me and it should be a worry to him. Do you know what I mean?"

Socrates: "No, I do not know what you mean, for we have not yet determined what it is that David is smug about, and why, if at all, he should be worried. Do you not agree that we should investigate this matter further? Pray, let us not forget that our chief task here is to arrive at the truth so that David and I may profit from your wisdom."

Phillip: "Hmph, it should soon become obvious. For in my career as an atheist, waging the good war against superstitious nonsense, I have found that claims such as David's are typically the fevered product of a mind which fears a universe bereft of meaning. Which is the way it really is, as far as I can tell. The fundamentalists I am speaking of make no effort to conceal their shallowness and have a shocking willingness to believe in literally anything at all. The more crazy an idea is, the more they believe in it. I don't know how many files I have packed with letters from people who claim to know what God is thinking, and from others who even claim to be God. Almost every day I receive letters from unrecognized geniuses who claim that they have reinvented the Wheel.

"David's ideas are essentially no different to these. I find it preposterous that he can say with certainty that God does not exist, that there is absolute Truth. It is absurd. I think it..."

Socrates: "One moment, do not think ill of me if I interrupt you here, for I think it critical that we clear up a small yet important matter of definition.

"Now you said you were an atheist, did you not?"

Phillip: "Yes."

Socrates: "Presumably this means you know that God does not exist, as opposed to an agnostic who is uncertain whether God exists or not?"

Phillip: "No, I object to your definition of Atheist. It appears to be too narrow."

Socrates: "How would you define it then?"

Phillip: "I would define an Atheist as someone who finds no evidence for the existence of God and therefore does not believe in such a thing."

Socrates: "So it is still possible that God might exist and your atheist altogether mistaken in his belief?"

Phillip: "Yes, my atheist certainly does not claim to have all the answers."

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

Socrates: "But it is still possible that your atheist could be completely deluded in his thinking. Do you not agree?"

Phillip: "Hmph, yes."

Socrates: "If there is always this possibility that your atheist could be deluded, then there is always the possibility that he is promoting the spread of ignorance in the world. Your atheist's faith, which relies upon the lack of evidence supporting the existence of God, is, at bottom, as equally uncertain as the theist's faith in the existence of a God. Do you not agree? Your atheist's philosophy is ultimately just as untenable as the theist's, because all the evidence he relies upon could be misleading. Do you not agree?"

Phillip: "Hmph, as I said, an atheist does not have all the answers."

Socrates: "Dear me, do you not find this disconcerting? I wonder if this being the case, how you arrived at the certain conclusion of David's smugness. You could be wrong, do you not agree?"

"Everything David has claimed could be absolutely true. Would he then be smug if he was speaking the truth? Is this not possible? I wonder if you have considered this, and if you have really paid any serious attention to his arguments. I would remind you here of your earlier promise to divulge that superior wisdom of yours from which David and I might benefit."

Phillip: "What was his argument again? Maybe I was too busy with engagements that day. From memory I think I poooh pooohed it along the lines Bertrand Russell would use, saying that the theistic arguments of today are much more clever. Oops, maybe that was another letter. However I do remember finding his essay on Feynman annoying. He was so meticulous that he even spelt my name and Ricard's incorrectly."

Socrates: "David's argument is simple. Most children could understand it if it were part of their education. All it needs is a clear, logical mind. I shall go through it slowly so you may raise any objections. Once more, here is the argument: A thing can only exist relative to another thing. For example 'tree' exists only relative to 'not tree', 'self' to 'not self' and so on and so on. This is the way our minds, starting from when we are young, go about cleverly dividing up the world into categories. Do you not agree?"

Phillip: "Yes I would have to agree with that."

Socrates: "Are you sure?"

Phillip: "Yes, Yes! I can not see how we could develop an idea of a thing with out making some sort of comparison with what it is not."

Socrates: "Now that you understand that, let us examine the relationship between a thing and its opposite. If for example 'self' does not exist without 'not self', how would you describe the relationship between all opposites?"

Phillip: "I would say one creates the other."

Socrates: "True, but another way we could describe this relationship is 'causal'. 'Self' causes 'not self' to exist and vice versa. Do you not agree?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Phillip: "I can not argue with that. What is your point!"

Socrates: "Well if all 'things' can not exist without their opposites, then all 'things' must have causes. And if all 'things' have causes, nothing is separate. Do you not agree?"

Phillip: "Yes, but what has this to do with David's proof for the non-existence of God?"

Socrates: "Do you not see that it is impossible for God to exist, because it is impossible for any 'thing' to possess independent existence, in other words, to be without cause."

Phillip: "I think I see what you mean."

Socrates: "Well then, there is no God. Such being the case I ask you how could David have been smug in his correspondence with you if he was but speaking the Truth. One can not feel smug if one is completely right, for such a person has nothing to gain. Our discussion has indeed been profitable. It was not as it first seemed, for it is surely you who could profit from David's wisdom and not the other way round. Do you not agree?"⁸¹

From: Phillip Adams, To: Myles Thresher

16 September 1993

Dear Myles,

Feel free to speak Socrates, but allow me to provide my own talk balloons in the comic of life.

Mind you, your style is less abrasive than Kevin's. For which I thank Bertrand Russell, in the absence of God.

But Myles, fundamentalism takes many forms. Sadly it is not unknown amongst those who identify themselves as atheist. And whilst debating the cosmic tooth fairy is a diverting pastime, fundamentalism, whether it wears a kaftan, a yamulka or an intellectual's beret, is so boring.⁸²

Cheers,

Phillip Adams

"I Think, Therefore I Haven't A Clue"

By Phillip Adams

The Australian, July 30, 1994

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Knowing what you don't know has to be the beginning of knowledge. This isn't to suggest that ignorance is bliss. It isn't. Ignorance is annoying and embarrassing. Not to mention dangerous. But to acknowledge what you don't know is to take the first steps towards intellectual self-improvement.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

"When you know a thing to hold that you know it, and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it: this is knowledge." said Confucius, who many regard as perceptive, in the 6th century BC.

Other voices come crowding in with comments. "Knowledge is power," says Francis Bacon, while the Bible warns that "he that increases knowledge increaseth sorrow". Benjamin Franklin interrupts with "to be proud of knowledge is to be blind with light", while Thomas Fuller butts in with "tis not knowing much, but what is useful, that makes a wise man".

Samual Johnson can't have enough of it. "All knowledge is of itself some value. There is nothing so minute or inconsiderable that I would not rather know it than not." Yet John F. Kennedy, probably reading a speech written by Arthur Schlesinger, said: "The greater our knowledge increases the greater our ignorance unfolds."

For me, the wisest observation was provided by a British scientist, whose name escapes me, an aphorism that should be printed on T-shirts and bumper stickers at a time when our species seems over-excited by its learning curve. "Data isn't information. Information isn't knowledge. And knowledge isn't wisdom." Ten out of 10, say I, and a koala bear stamp.

Writing in *Tristram Shandy*, Laurence Sterne said something that verges on the profound: "The desire of knowledge, like the thirst of riches, increases ever with the acquisition of it." Spot on. Once you develop a taste for it, you tend to become insatiable, an intellectual junkie who can't get enough of it, who pigs out on knowing anything and everything. I notice it in the way I can't stop reading. If there isn't a newspaper, I'll read the label on the sauce bottle. And I'll read it while I'm listening to the wireless and, simultaneously, trying to eavesdrop on a conversation. Thus Eve's eating of the apple not only gave knowledge a bad name, but has led to widespread gluttony.

Yet I find myself agreeing with Voltaire that, at the end of the day, all this desperate ingestion of information, this feasting on fact, this ravenous need to know, leads to a strange feeling of emptiness. "The more I read, the more I meditate, and the more I acquire," he wrote in his *Philosophical Dictionary*, "the more I am able to affirm that I know nothing."

Yet there are those among us who claim that, within moments, human beings will possess GUT and TOE. The former stands for the "Grand Unified Theory" and the latter means the "Theory of Everything". Tomorrow, at the latest, next Thursday, a scientist will write the final formula, the fundamental equation on a blackboard at Oxford or Cambridge or a whiteboard at Harvard or Yale. It will be as elegant as $E = mc^2$ and will have unmasked God or made him redundant. There are others, however, and I count myself among them, who suspect that GUT will turn out to be JAT, or "Just Another Tautology". That the universe will continue to be a wonderful mystery, a cosmic striptease, the dance of the infinity of veils.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Which brings me to someone I've interviewed recently, a philosopher from Tucson, Arizona, called Dr Ann Kerwin. She's into ignorance in a big way, seeing it as a useful and creative notion. Where knowledge and ignorance are usually portrayed as polar opposites, as dualities, Kerwin sees them as intermingled, symbiotic.

She presented me with what she calls an explorer's guide to ignorance, which takes the form of a sort of map of a strange country. And just as Italy resembles a boot, her country looks suspiciously like a question mark. As you explore its latitudes and longitudes, you come across the following forms of ignorance.

1. The known unknowns. That is, all the things we know we do not know.
2. The unknown unknowns. That is, all the things we do not know we do not know.
3. Error, or all the things we think we know, but don't.
4. Tacit knowing - all the things we do not know we know.
5. All taboos - or forbidden knowledge.
6. All denial - the things too painful to know which we energetically suppress.

Now let me contribute some variations on the theme. Think of the things you know that are no longer correct - as distinct from errors. These are the areas where knowledge is simply left behind by medical or scientific progress, not becoming wrong so much as insufficiently right. (Isaac Newton's beliefs about the universe can't be described as errors - they represent some of the greatest thoughts in human history - but knowledge has moved on, not mocking but transcending his, containing it.)

Then there's the knowledge that some people claim about the universe that involves notions of deity and the supernatural, knowledge that isn't known at all but, rather, felt. In this category, people who say "I know" are really saying "I believe" or "I have faith". Yet they regard this as the highest form of knowledge, as ineffable.

Kerwin is right that ignorance is a vast and fertile domain, a dynamic source of learning. So how can we approach our ignorance productively? "With humility, with honesty and wonder, with questioning, humour, relentless scrutiny, with imagination and creativity."

I think Kerwin deserves another of those koala bear stamps. And she's right to point out that ignorance is interdisciplinary, that it exists in all disciplines, in any subject, at all levels.

Believe it or not, Kerwin prepares a curriculum in medical ignorance for the college of medicine at the University of Arizona. Surrounded by medical colleagues, she is billed as "philosopher-in-residence" and runs seminars and clinics on what is not known. Not so people can wallow in ignorance but so they can acknowledge it as a prelude to dealing with it.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

"If we knew all, there would be no object, no motive for inquiry," says Kerwin. "No cause to wonder."

Kerwin was brought to Australia by HERDS, the improbable acronym for the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia, and at seminars around Australia she told people that learning presupposes ignorance, that from ignorance stems wondering, questioning, pondering, poetry, fantasy, mystery, intuition, silence, imagination and self-reflection. She sees ignorance as driving research and knowledge, that it is in no way its antithesis or enemy.

You can see her point that the dangers lie in the intellectual censorships of taboos and in the self-censorship of denial. And she's certainly right that there's much to be learned from things such as tacit knowing - the knowledge of the "I didn't know I had it in me" variety. Because often what distinguishes significant people is the confidence they place in "experience", in intuition or gut response. Yet it is in that tacit knowledge that, it seems to me, a great deal of wisdom resides.

Take my grandfather, long dead. He lived and died in the working class and had virtually no formal education. Yet while he was short on data (to return to my scientist's aphorism) and information and, indeed, on objective knowledge, he was a wise human being. Somehow he just seemed to know. He particularly seemed to know about human beings. And he had something that many gifted academics lack: judgment. Grandpa reminded me that, at the end of the day, knowledge is proportionate to being. You know in virtue of what you are.

Think about all the things you know you don't know. Be aware that there are things you don't know you don't know. Acknowledge you errors - all the things you think you know but don't, and work to destroy taboos and denials. But take comfort from all the things you don't know you know, in the knowledge that research in neurophysiology and cognitive psychology support the efficacy of tacit powers of learning. Because the more we know about knowing the more we realise that there's more to knowledge that we ever knew. If you know what I mean.

And if you don't, don't worry about it. Confess to ignorance and use it as an aphrodisiac for learning. And take comfort from the fact that there are a lot of people out there who know a great deal, but who can hardly dress themselves in the morning. Not all the idiot savants are in institutions or *Rain Man*. Over the years I've met quite a few who are faculty heads.

Australia needs a few philosophers in residence such as Kerwin. While she teaches her doctors about their medical ignorance, I'd like to see others reminding our politicians about their political ignorance, and our business leaders about their social ignorance. Because what each of us doesn't know would make a great book. In my case, and I suspect in yours, a great library full of great books.⁸³

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

From: David Quinn, To: Phillip Adams

1st August, 1994

Dear Phillip,

I am responding to the article you wrote about knowledge and wisdom published in The Australian on July 30. You may or may not remember me but I wrote a couple of letters to you last year on this issue, using Richard Feynman as an example.

To confess, I am not sure why I am writing to you again. I know from previous experience that to discuss important matters with you in an intelligent and rational manner is virtually impossible. Like a Christian, you have a particular world-view to protect and, like a Christian, you reject out of hand anything which does not appear to support it. The only difference is that whereas Christians used to apply the term "heretics" to the people who didn't conform, you simply call them "fanatics".

Wisdom is a tremendously important subject and can only be approached with absolute sincerity. That is, you have to actually *want* to understand the highest wisdom and you have to be 100% intellectually honest in your thinking. I question whether you qualify on either count.

You can praise intellectual honesty all you like, Phillip Adams, but what is the use if you don't actually practise it yourself? There is neither consistency nor clarity in your thinking. You may be able to process information in the quick and capable manner needed for working in the media, but when it gets to the nitty-gritty of actually understanding the fundamentals of our existence your mind literally folds up and your precious intellectual honesty goes out the window.

Look, let's have it out. Just *what* is this wisdom that you go on about? Although, you see fit to devote an entire column to the subject, you are remarkably silent when it comes to actually defining what it is. The most I can garner from your article is that it is a kind of intuitive knack for "knowing" people. Is this what the ultimate wisdom of the universe is? A knack for reading people's characters?

Christians have rightly been accused of being human-centred in their thinking. They think that Nature revolves around the human race. Your grandfather's "wisdom" is just another variant of this theme.

You state that the wisest observation on the whole subject is "Data isn't information. Information isn't knowledge. And knowledge isn't wisdom." Just what does this mean? Does it mean that *every* type of knowledge is unrelated to wisdom? That if you know "something", then this "something" is by definition not wisdom? Don't look to Phillip Adams for answers to these questions. A deafening silence is about all you will get.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

Oh, all right, I am being a bit unfair. You do mumble something about "tacit knowledge", which "seems" to you to be a source of wisdom. But I wonder whether it also "seems" to you that intuition and experience is also a source of error and that just as many invalid bits of information come from the gut as do valid bits and that in any case all of them *without exception* have to be scrutinized by the logical thought processes of the brain before they can be declared either true or false. In other words, reason is more fundamental to the determination of wisdom than is anything gained by experience or intuition.

Your Dr Kerwin is a particularly mediocre fish. She is of the Richard Feynman variety, one of the millions on this planet who are not the slightest bit interested in Truth yet feel the urge to denounce it anyway. "If we knew all, there would be no object, no motive for inquiry. No cause for wonder," she purrs. Translate: Truth would destroy human happiness, so let us stay as far away from It as possible.

It is a strange kind of logic that she puts forward. I mean, the purpose of inquiry is to *understand reality*, is it not? And yet we are told by Dr Kerwin (and the millions of her soul-mates) that if we actually came to understand reality our lives would become bleak and meaningless and unhappy. In other words, she wants us to inquire into reality but to avoid being successful in this inquiry! It would be like urging a dedicated young athlete, one who trains arduously on a daily basis, to avoid at all costs winning the Olympic Gold Medal as there would be nothing left to strive for afterwards. Oh, the humour of it all! Only this feminine age of ours could possibly come up with such a farce.

Like your grandfather, I too am able to judge people, and I judge you, Phillip, to be nothing other than an old woman. Whatever spark of masculinity you may have had in your youth has vanished long ago. Your mind has entirely given itself over to the feminine, probably because it guarantees you a legion of female admirers (with a legion of male supporters in tow).

Yes, to be popular in this world, all you have to do is mumble on about the unknowability of ultimate truth and the sagacity of intuition. Nothing else is needed. Women will love you.

Again, I don't know why I am writing these things to you. I know you have no interest in wisdom. Your whole life, one of gorging daily on information and knowledge, announces this loud and clear. No doubt you will throw this letter away without giving it a second thought.

But please, I urge you to stick with the usual drivel that you normally write and leave the important issues to those who actually care about them. In that way, at least, you would do less harm in this world.⁸⁴

David Quinn.

THE THINKING MAN’S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

“LETTER TO DAVID SUZUKI FROM KEVIN SOLWAY” (1994)

November 6, 1994

Dear David,

Well, it's been an age since I received your postcard turning down our offer of honorary membership in our Atheist Society, and I've finally decided to respond.

To jog your memory, you said "I believe that my position is based on an act of faith, just as a theist's is. I don't believe you can prove or disprove the existence of God."

Your statement indicates to me that your belief (that you can't prove or disprove the existence of God) is not merely a belief, as one would believe, say, in evolution for example, but is in fact something you hold to be a certainty.

One "believes" in evolution until such time as the evidence favours another understanding. But your belief that you can't prove or disprove the existence of God is something you hold to be an absolute truth, impervious to anything.

You claim to know with certainty that all knowledge is uncertain, but are seemingly blind to the obvious meaninglessness of this notion.

You should know there are two kinds of knowledge. Firstly there is scientific knowledge, which is any knowledge based on observation and measurement, and is obviously an uncertain knowledge. Then there is philosophic or purely reasoned knowledge, which has nothing to do with observation and measurement, but is based on definitions, and provides certain knowledge.

Our modern, feminine, age of philistines has completely ignored the certainty of philosophic knowledge and has thus turned its back on the most essential and beautiful knowledge of all.

My knowledge of the nonexistence of God is certain. To repeat what I explained to you on a previous occasion, I can say with absolute certainty that God does not exist, based on what God and existence are commonly defined to be. God is defined to be all-powerful and infinite . . . but existence is finite and limited. So, to say that God exists is to say "the infinite is finite" which I reject as absurd, just as I reject the nonsensical or mad notion of a "black white". Thus do I know with certainty that God does not exist.

You may object that many people do not share my narrow definitions of "God" and "existence" and therefore my argument is of little or no value. So let me promptly put this objection to rest.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Let's look at alternative definitions to an all-powerful, infinite God. Notably, any alternative to an infinite God must be a finite God. Well, we could define God to be "a very powerful being" or even "the most powerful being". Such a God would be firmly in the domain of uncertain scientific knowledge, and would be infinitely removed (literally) from the traditional God who is supposed to be infinite and all-powerful. He would be only a shabbily hypothesized powerful alien of questionable morals.

That's why people prefer the infinite God to the finite one, and shows why my assumption that God is commonly defined as "all- powerful and infinite" is valid. For good reason I have excluded the possible alternative definitions of God that I would call "completely mad" (as opposed to just mad), such as defining God to be my pet budgie, or to be anything that I can't possibly think of. That leaves my assumption about the common definition of existence. Is it valid? Am I barking at the wind?

Then let's ask if there are possible alternative definitions of existence - at least, ones that aren't overly mad. I have said that existence is finite and limited. This is because something is said to exist if it relates to something else (like an observer). So, if something appears to us (in whatever way) we say it exists. Any alternative definition of existence would have to define things as existing that don't appear to us in any way at all (whether through our senses, intellect, or imagination). This is overly mad.

Ah, then what about Nature you ask? If Nature is defined to be "everything" (a sensible definition), then does it exist or not? Nature is by definition infinite (not limited) so it cannot relate to anything and therefore doesn't fit my definition of existence. So am I saying that Nature doesn't exist and am therefore a raving lunatic? No, Nature neither exists nor does it not exist. The distinction "existence/nonexistence" is inappropriate when applied to the infinite, which is beyond distinctions.

So I am not a raving lunatic, and my proof of the nonexistence of God based on the common definitions of both God and existence is perfectly valid. This is very significant.⁸⁵

There is more than faith, David Suzuki!

Regards

Kevin Solway

P.S. This would *have* to be a "patronizing letter".

TALK-BACK WITH RADIO PRIEST (1995)

- 1 January 1995 - 21 May 1995 -

"Talk-Back with Radio Priest Transcripts covers subjects ranging from blasphemy, overpopulation, faith, education, Buddhism, miracles and Mother's Day."^{*} – Kevin Solway

Introduction

For three hours every Sunday Night, Father John McEwin, a Catholic priest, hosted a talkback program which made the pretense of concentrating upon "religious" issues. It was advertized as an "open forum" in which people could ring up and discuss concerns about religious and social issues with Father John. Without exception, each show was utterly pitiful and an embarrassment to listen to.

Judging by his callers, the overwhelming majority of his listeners were the very elderly and/or the very weak, who used the show simply to indulge in the pleasures of self-pity and indignation, and to pat each other on the back for being so incredibly spiritual. Never did anyone ring up and discuss the nature of Reality, or the question of how one arrives at perfection, or the future of humanity. The subject of God, for example, was rarely broached, and even then it was only used to enhance the back-patting. Caller after caller would whinge about how their son or daughter wouldn't talk to them anymore, or about how upset they were over their father dying fifteen years before, or about how they had overcome cancer, or about how they had been visited by the Virgin Mary. In short, it was the most brainless drivel imaginable.

To be sure, the odd fundamentalist would ring in, quote scripture, and pass damning judgment upon the luke-warm Catholics; and the odd sceptic would pose some mild question about the sexuality of priests - but other than that, it was entirely insipid.

Given all this, it may be asked why Dan, Kevin, and myself would bother to make any calls at all to this program. As far as I was concerned, there were three reasons. One, entertainment. Two, to practice the art of teaching about God. And three, there was the faint hope a young person may be listening to the show.

This last reason was obviously the most important one. I made all of my calls on the assumption that there was a young, intelligent, thoughtful person out there, a rare youth with a conscience, whose mind was desperately craving a few truthful words, and who was listening to a religious program in the valiant hope of finding some. It need only take one judi-

^{*} A series of calls made by David Quinn, Dan Rowden, and Kevin Solway to Father John McEwin, host of a Sunday night religious program on 4BC, from January to May, 1995.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

cious phrase to plant the philosophic seed in good soil. Such a phrase, if heard at just the right moment, could mean the difference between a young person becoming a great spiritual hero, a dragon slayer who ruthlessly wages war against ignorance and delusion ... and a non-entity with a mortgage, three kids, and a string of rosary beads.

David Quinn, December, 1995

CALL ONE - David Quinn

- New Years Resolution -

1st January 1995

New Year's Day and everyone was ringing up and making a new wish for the year. These ranged from world peace to making more money to helping the homeless to hoping their daughter would one day ring them. I made a wish which was truly worthwhile ...

- D.Q

Father John: "... the beginning on the new year, 1995. 131332 is our telephone number. It's great to be with you here tonight. Hello David."

David: "Yes, hello. I'd like to make a wish for the next year."

Father John: "Great! David: And that is, I want the entire Christian mentality thoroughly eliminated from the face of the earth."

Father John: "Good idea, David! Now what's that going to accomplish?"

David: "Well, it will give more chance for there to be wisdom in this world. All Christianity does is foster mediocrity. It does everything it can to obstruct the individual striving for wisdom. Everything about it is totally the opposite of Truth, and is the opposite of Jesus's teachings. So, for example, the woman before who rang up about how Jesus came to the world and advocated a style of living, or a teaching we should follow ... when I look at Christianity I see that it is the complete opposite of what he taught and how he lived. For example, Jesus spoke about giving up everything we hold dear for the sake of the Truth, but Christians preach the complete opposite - they preach the acquisition of material and emotional possessions, attachments to beliefs, to doctrines, to priests. They're the rich people Jesus spoke about ... yeah ..."

Father John: "You got that off your chest now?"

David: "I'm dead serious. I think that Christianity is thoroughly evil, and not only Christianity but all religions."

Father John: "Okay ... well ... all religions? Not just Christianity?"

David: "Yes."

Father John: "Islam, Buddhism - we wipe the whole lot out?"

David: "Yes."

Father John: "So what do we believe in, David?"

David: "The Truth."

Father John: "Right, good, that's very nice. What is the Truth?"

David: "The Truth is the ultimate reality of Nature. So, a life of Truth consists of opening your mind up to the ultimate reality of Nature, and to live in a direct relationship to it."

Father John: "So what becomes the benchmark for Truth?"

David: "It is one's individual understanding of the Truth."

Father John: "Alright, so, all of a sudden, you can have an idea of Truth, and I can have an idea of Truth, and your idea of Truth can be 180 degrees different to mine--"

David: "Okay, but I'm talking about a wise person's understanding of Truth, as opposed to an ignorant person's understanding of Truth."

Father John: "Isn't that very, very subjective and therefore very, very dangerous?"

David: "Well, Christianity is very, very subjective and very, very dangerous. Christi-

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

anity talks about having absolute morals, but ultimately it is just as subjective whether you choose to have these morals--"

Father John: "David? Excuse me, David?"

David: "Yes?"

Father John: "We have to go to the news now, but I would very much like to continue this after the news. You happy with that?"

David: "Okay then."

Father John: "Alright, back after the news. 131332 is our telephone number and we'll be back to take some more of all your calls and comments."

[News Break]

Father John: "... Before the news we were talking to David about ... well, David, you tell us what we've been talking about."

David: "Well, the end-point of the last discussion was whether what I was advocating was totally subjective and--"

Father John: "Just to set the scene for those who may have just joined us - you were suggesting that a good idea would be to get rid of Christianity, and, not only get rid of Christianity, but also to get rid of all the major religions, or indeed all religions. This, I think, was what you said, yes?"

David: "Absolutely."

Father John: "Okay. And I suggested that ... well, you then said ... or I asked you, 'What should we believe in?', and you said 'Truth', and I asked 'What is Truth?', and you said, 'It's whatever anybody believes in', and I made the point that what you believe in could be diametrically opposed to what I believe in, therefore who's right and who's wrong? And then we went to the news."

David: "Yes, but I didn't make the point that Truth is whatever you believe in."

Father John: Ah, okay - so what it is Truth? David: It is a definite understanding of Ultimate Reality. Father John: Truth is what you believe in.

David: No, it is what the wise person sees to be the Ultimate Reality.

Father John: So who dictates who is wise and who is not?

David: The wise person decides that for himself.

Father John: So what if you're wise and I think I'm wise?

David: Well, it's only up to the wise person to realize that for himself.

Father John: We both can't be wise.

David: Yes, but a wise person is wise and an ignorant person is ignorant.

Father John: So, you're wise and I'm ignorant.

David: Yes, absolutely.

Father John: Okay. I can live with that.

David: "But going back to this idea of subjectivity: even though Christianity purports to hold absolute values, those 'absolute values' are themselves subjective. They are created by our minds; we choose to adopt them - or Christians do - so it's 100% subjective. If we go back to earlier in the piece, when you were talking to somebody else about faith and knowledge, you were saying that faith is something separate from knowledge - it is apart from knowledge. So I say to you that this makes your faith 100% subjective and therefore arbitrary."

Father John: "No ... I'm saying that we seek faith through understanding, but we will never understand completely."

David: "Well, I disagree. I say that the Ultimate Truth is there to be understood, and this idea that you were just speaking of, that we can't understand the Truth completely, is the very mentality which I am against."

Father John: "Well, I'm not ramming it down your throat. I mean, as you say, we choose, and you're very free to choose whatever you choose. I can handle that. I mean, you've chosen tonight to tell me that you're wise and I'm ignorant. Well, I'm not blown up about that. I can handle that."

David: "I think that every caller that's been on this program ... except for the first fellow who rang - was it Len?"

Father John: "Hmm, hmm."

David: "He was the only one who had a slight spark in him, and that--"

Father John: "No, he was the only fellow who agreed with you."

David: "Well, I agree with him in the sense that he values logic and reason. Anyone who places value on--"

Father John: "So you don't think any of the Bishops who were on tonight value logic and reason?"

David: "No, not in the slightest degree."

Father John: "Okay ... alright ... well, you feel you had your say?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David: "Yes. It's not for your benefit. It's just for young people who might be listening."

Father John: "For sure!"

David: "I want them to value reason and Truth, and not submit to a belief system."

Father John: "Thank you very much, David."

David: "Okay then."

Father John: "Happy New Year."

David: "Bye-bye."⁸⁶

CALL TWO - Dan Rowden

- Blasphemy -
8th January 1995

Here we see McEwin's powers of reason in full flight. They soared off into the heavens and beyond, leaving Danny spinning in awe. Danny, you see, made the crucial mistake of wanting to speak about the Truth, but, as McEwin made marvelously clear, this is something which only hinders the freedom of the soul.

- D.Q.

Father John: "Alright, back to your calls and comments here on 4BC. Lovely to be with you. Hello, Danny."

Dan: "G'day, John. How ya doing?"

Father John: "Very well, thank you."

Dan: Yeah, mate, I was hoping to broach the subject of blasphemy with you."

Father John: "Right."

Dan: "I guess it's clear enough that Christians are want to charge others with the sin of blasphemy, but in my experience it is precisely they who are the worst offenders in the matter. Almost every time Christians open their mouths to actually speak about God, what issues forth is just utter blasphemy. I guess you're probably wondering what I mean by 'blasphemy'."

Father John: "Well, I think me and many listeners, Danny."

Dan: "Well, anything that is said about God which is false or inaccurate is blasphemous. In other words, anything which misrepresents the Divine Nature; that is to say, any statement which finitizes God. Whenever Christians speak about God, they finitize that which is, by definition, *infinite*. I mean, that to me is just sheer blasphemy."

Father John: "Could you give us a practical example, Danny?"

Dan: "Okay, when Christians claim one notion or action to be the will of God, but not another, for instance; or when they speak of God as having some characteristics and not others."

Father John: "Yes, but could you just give me an example, Danny? Like, can you just role play, for us, an example? Just say a phrase which you would consider blasphemous - we know that you don't mean it."

Dan: "Okay. 'God is love.'"

Father John: "... alright ..."

Dan: "That's a reasonably common one."

Father John: "... okay ... I understand what you're saying."

Dan: "But it's not just that. The fundamentalists are particularly at fault in this matter, because they have a tendency to try and tell you what is and isn't the will of God. But if God is infinite - and God most certainly *is* infinite, by definition - then you cannot say that. You cannot say that one thing is the will of God and not another. It's just absolute blasphemy. And there's--"

Father John: "Danny?"

Dan: "Yeah?"

Father John: "Can I just respond?"

Dan: "Yeah."

Father John: "There would be a lot of people listening who would say, 'Well, what's wrong with saying that God is love?' What you're talking about - correct me if I'm wrong, but I think I'm on the right track - you're talking about a philosophical stance here: that God is everything, and even by saying 'God is everything', I'm limiting God to the concept of 'everything' - and God is more than that. So what Danny is saying is that you can't say that God is love, because God is more than love; and you can't say that

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

God is Truth, because God is Truth alright, but He's more than Truth; and you can't say that God is good, because, yes, He's good, but He's bigger than good - whatever goodness is. Is this what you're saying, Danny?"

Dan: "... um ... well ... yeah ... I suppose, the gist is right, but--"

Father John: "But you can't say that it's necessarily blasphemy. It's merely the inadequacies of the human language. It's not a blasphemous statement."

Dan: "No, I don't agree, because every time we make those statements about God, we *consciously* finitize God. As far as I'm concerned, any statement which pertains to God directly, and which isn't a variation of "God is infinite", is blasphemous, because it misrepresents the Divine Nature. It's a sort of human egotism, a willfulness--"

Father John: "Well, Danny, you make a statement which doesn't misrepresent the Divine Nature. I think that's humanly impossible. That's the whole point - that we are finite and God is infinite. So how can we possibly comprehend, let alone articulate, the fullness of the Mystery?"

Dan: "You say, 'God is infinite'. It's as simple as that. End of story."

Father John: "Well, that's a blasphemous statement, under your definition."

Dan: No, it's not."

Father John: "Because you can't say that God is infinite, because God is bigger than being infinite."

Dan: "... Well, no ... You see, you have a finite concept of the infinite."

Father John: "No, I don't. No, I don't."

Dan: "Yes, you do! Yes, you do!"

Father John: "Alright."

Dan: "'Infinite' means having no boundaries."

Father John: "We'll agree to disagree on this one. I wasn't too bad a philosophy student at the old seminary. It's one thing I knew a little a bit about."

Dan: "Well, academic philosophy is an absolute joke, in my view - whether it is a seminary that performs it, or a university."

Father John: "Alright, Danny, we'll leave it there, but we understand what you're saying."

Dan: "Okay then. Bye."⁸⁷

CALL THREE - David Quinn

- Faith I -

15th January 1995

The word "faith" was used many times each week on this program, but one never quite knew what McEwin or his callers actually meant by it. (I am speaking merely poetically here; it was blindingly obvious what they meant by it.) As a rule, they continually shifted their ground in order to make the word as nebulous as possible, and the reason they did this, of course, was to make the word "God" as nebulous as possible. This is typical of Christianity, a religion whose one defining characteristic is a vicious hatred of reality.

- D.Q.

Father John: "Okay, let's take our next caller. Hello, David."

David: "Hello. I'd like to talk about something a bit more spiritual, and that is the question of faith. I've been listening to your program now for several weeks, and I don't have any clear idea of what you mean by faith. So I wonder if you could give me a brief definition, or just some sort of idea, of what you mean by faith."

Father John: "What's the comment you'd like to make, David?"

David: "Well, again, I'd like to discuss faith, and I can't discuss it unless I know what you mean by faith."

Father John: "No, but you can certainly make a comment about it, if you like to share it with us."

David: "Okay. I have real difficulty with this term "faith", because--"

Father John: "I've worked that much out. So why do you ask me about my stance on it?"

David: "Well, because you're a--"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Father John: "Because you want to tell me your difficulties. So that's what I say: you make your comment and that will be good."

David: "Alright. The difficulty I have with faith is that, on the one hand, you have hundreds of millions of Christians who believe in a God, and they believe in this through faith, and on the other hand, you have, say, hundreds of millions of Buddhists who don't believe in a God - it's a totally atheistic religion - and they use that as faith. They believe in no God, and that's their faith. So you have these two opposing belief-systems and they're both underpinned by faith. So there's the rub."

Father John: "... yeah ... I don't see any incongruity or inconsistency whatsoever."

David: "Well, okay, we're talking about--"

Father John: "It's not the same faith, is it?"

David: "Not at all. So one of them, at least, must be false."

Father John: "What do *you* believe in, David?"

David: "I believe in Truth."

Father John: "That's right, we had that, yeah. So do you have a faith in Truth?"

David: "A faith in Truth. That's right."

Father John: "There you go. You use the same word too. So there's the three of us - you, me, and the Buddhists use the same word. Faith."

David: "Yes, but I have a different method to you and the Buddhists. I mean--"

Father John: "That's okay, too."

David: "Yes, but my point is that there cannot be both a God and not a God at the same time. It's just not possible. So we have all these millions of people who are following their respective faiths, and, at the very least, one of them must be totally false. They're following a false faith. You see? Because they can't both be right."

Father John: "... Well ... I think you might be limiting God there."

David: "God cannot exist and not exist in reality. You can't have both, or you're making a total mockery of your own reason."

Father John: "I'm sorry? ... We believe God exists."

David: "Okay, the Buddhists believe that He doesn't exist."

Father John: "They don't use the terminology of 'God', but they still have a belief in the transcendent, which is exactly what our's is."

David: "No, they don't. They reject all concepts of God."

Father John: "Well, okay then, we have a different faith. What else is new? We've had it for thousands of years."

David: "Alright, I'm trying to cast suspicion of this idea of faith. It has no value."

Father John: "People have been trying to do that for *eons*!"

David: "Okay, but I brought up a very concrete case where there are two faiths, they're both exactly the same in that they're using faith--"

Father John: "Well, we can find two hundred faiths!"

David: "Yes, that's my point. Faith is useless."

Father John: "It might be useless to you, David."

David: "Yes, because I value Truth."

Father John: "Okay. I respect that."

David: "I value Truth, and I see faiths pointing out in all different directions, and, at the very least, all but one must be wrong."

Father John: "Okay then."

David: "Okay, so--"

Father John: "Thanks, David."

David: "Is that all there's going to be?"⁸⁸

CALL FOUR - Dan Rowden

- Faith II -

15th January 1995

With this call, Danny attempted to pick up where I left off, but he was faced with an almost impossible task - that of trying to talk sense to a man who loves nonsense. This was made even more difficult by McEwin's change of tactics, to play the man instead of the ball. Deciding to ignore rational discussion completely, he instead tried to make it as personal as he could get.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

- D.Q.

Father John: "... if you're just listening to the radio lying in bed, half your luck, I hope you nod off to sleep shortly and rip into another working week on Monday morning. Hello, Danny."

Dan: "G'day John. How ya doing?"

Father John: "I'm very well, thank you."

Dan: "Mate, I caught your conversation with David a few calls back in regards to faith. Now I must admit that I'm kind of ambivalent over the nature of this thing called faith as well. I think the point that David was trying to make, in part, was that faith provides no rational basis for choosing one religion over another."

Father John: "I think that's true."

Dan: "Can I put a hypothetical situation to you? Imagine for a moment that I've just walked out of a jungle somewhere in the middle of South America and I've got absolutely no knowledge of any religion whatsoever, but I'm nevertheless an intelligent human being. What reasons could you give me for choosing Christianity over any other faith?"

[Long Pause]

Father John: "... well, what's the hypothetical? ... Am I meant to be dragged into a debate here where you have one faith and I have another faith and you belt me and I belt you and so it goes on. I'd rather, if people want to make a comment, go for your life. That's what the forum is for. I don't really see my role as being dragged into a no-win situation of endless debate."

Dan: "Okay--"

Father John: "So, Danny, by all means make your point, make your comment, you're very welcome, mate. What is it?"

Dan: "It's simply that faith, as I said a minute ago, really does provide no rational basis for choosing one religion over another. For that reason, it seems to me that religious persuasion is simple a matter of meaningless things, like hereditary, etcetera."

Father John: "Okay, just moving on. Can I ask, are you with David there? Like, you're both at West End. I presume so--"

Dan: "Yes,"

Father John: "Are you in the same room together?"

Dan: "Yes."

Father John: "There you go. How was that for a pretty simple deduction! Have you guys had a bad experience with the Church or something like that? I don't understand where we're going to with this one, you know? Fair enough, you fellows are a bit down on the faith side, and I think David's New Year's resolution, two weeks ago, was to wipe out all Christianity, and so it goes on. That's nice, but there are millions of people, in fact, there are *billions* of people throughout the world who hold on to their faith. Now what is the bad experience that you guys have had, or what is the cause you are pushing here? Where are we coming from, I suppose, Danny?"

Dan: "Well, I suppose the only bad experience we could say that we've had is not necessarily with Christianity specifically, but with the deluded nature of the human mind generally. And what we're pushing is--"

Father John: "In *your* opinion, the deluded nature of the human mind."

Dan: "No, it's a matter of simple logic."

Father John: "In your opinion. It's your logic."

Dan: "Well, no, it's not really a matter of opinion, because it's just simple inescapable logic that the vast majority of human beings are--"

Father John: "Including our listeners here?"

Dan: "Well--"

Father John: "Including our listeners? I just want to let them know that you're making a comment about *them*. Is that what you're saying now?"

Dan: "Well, yes. Absolutely."

Father John: "So any of our listeners are free to ring up and respond to this, right?"

Dan: "Of course."

Father John: "The comment you're about to make is about the vast majority of 4BC listeners on a Sunday night."

Dan: "The vast majority of people on the *planet* entirely are, by definition, deluded in terms of the important issues. And it's just a logical fact. To me, it constitutes a form of contempt for the human mind not to acknowledge that fact. I'm not trying to condemn, I'm trying to *affirm* principles like truth and knowledge."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Father John: "Well, do you want to just tell our listeners how they are deluded."

Dan: "Well, they have--"

Father John: "I mean, you've just finished telling us all that we're deluded. So, forget the rest of the human race, just talk to us 4BC listeners who are listening to you right now - how are we deluded, Danny?"

Dan: "Well, you have *faith*. That's how I know that you're deluded. It's the distinction between faith and knowledge. All beliefs--"

Father John: "There's not a whole lot of depth to this argument here."

Dan: "All beliefs are, by definition, something other than truth and knowledge. That's why they're known as beliefs."

Father John: "Well, Danny, I'll leave it with you. You can have another opportunity to get your case a little bit water-tight because that one wouldn't last three seconds in court."⁸⁹

CALL FIVE - Kevin Solway

- The Pope -
22nd January 1995

The Pope had been visiting Australia during the week to beatify Mary McKillop and the subsequent show on Sunday night was filled with proclamations of love and adoration for the man. Callers were tripping over themselves to say what a great and holy man he was. Kevin thought otherwise and said so.

- D.Q.

Father John: "Hello, Kevin."

Kevin: "Good evening."

Father John: "Welcome to the program."

Kevin: "Yes, I'd like to a comment about some of the things the Pope has been saying about Buddhism recently."

Father John: "Go for your life."

Kevin: "The first thing I'd like to say is that I'm not a Buddhist myself, but I do know a lot about Buddhism, and it's clear to me, after what I've heard the Pope say, that I know a lot more about Buddhism than he does. So I don't think the Pope has got any right whatsoever ... he's totally unqualified to stand in judgment on other religions about which he knows nothing at all. For example, he says that all religions should unite, but he also says that Buddhism is *atheistic*. Now, for someone who holds God as the central tenet of his whole life, his whole belief, and the centre of his whole existence, for him to say that somebody else is atheistic is probably the most damning thing he could have thought of to say."

Father John: "Hmm. Have you got the direct quote there, Kevin?"

Kevin: "No, but I've read his latest book, and 'atheistic' is the word that he used. 'Buddhism is atheistic', he said. I couldn't think of a worse thing he could have done. You know, Jesus said himself, 'Anyone who is not with

me is against me.' This obviously is exactly the same philosophy as the Pope. He's basically saying that Buddhists are totally on the wrong track. He also says that Buddhism is 'negative', and that it's 'indifferent to the world'. Now anyone who has studied Buddhism for more than about five minutes knows that that's not the case. The whole basis of Buddhism is compassion."

Father John: "What he says is that 'to indulge in a negative attitude toward the world is fundamentally contrary to the development of both man and the world, which the Creator has given and entrusted to man as his task.' So he's not saying Buddhism as such."

Kevin: "Well, he did say that Buddhism is negative in his opinion, and he thinks that the goal of Buddhism is a bad thing - the ultimate goal of Buddhism, which is enlightenment. You know, he says that he respects other religions 'in so far as they are true'. I mean, I find this quite funny. I don't know who he's trying to kid! I could say the same thing about Christianity. I respect Christianity *in so far as it is true* - the fact that I don't think it's true to the slightest degree is neither here nor there. I think he's just being a salesman. I can't take him seriously at all. He's got no right to do what he's doing."

Father John: "He's certainly tried to ... calm the waters, for want of a better analogy.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

He's in Sri Lanka at the moment, and he does seemed to have responded to the offence that many people in the Buddhist faith have taken."

Kevin: "And so they should."

Father John: "The Sri Lankan Catholics Bishops Conference have even issued a statement, but I'd have to say that it wasn't an apology. It was more an explanation as such."

Kevin: "I think what he's trying to do is that he wants all the religions to unite, but he's stated that he thinks his religion is the best one, so obviously he wants all the religions to unite *under him*. This is exactly the same as all the crazy gurus that have ever been in the world. I don't know why people can't see through it."

Father John: "A crazy guru, eh?"

Kevin: "Well, I'm thinking of the people like the Hare Krishna guru. He's probably one of the most corrupt people I can think of."

Father John: "So you're going to tell us that Pope John Paul the Second is a crazy guru, Kevin?"

Kevin: "Well, he is! I've got no doubt about it. No honest person would behave in the way that he does."

Father John: "Well, there's plenty of other Australians who've got a bit of a doubt about it."

Kevin: "Yeah."

Father John: "Amazing, isn't it?"

Kevin: "Well, I'm amazed that more Catholics don't do something about it. I hear all the time, listening to your program, people complaining about what the Pope's doing: like he doesn't allow women to be priests. Well, why don't they just form their own religion? I mean, it seems like the obvious thing to do. If you don't agree with what the Pope is doing, then follow your conscience--"

Father John: "But our religion doesn't follow the Pope."

Kevin: "But you do."

Father John: "The Pope is the leader."

Kevin: "It's not a democracy."

Father John: "Well, does Paul Keating make every rule for Australia?"

Kevin: "Well, if he doesn't do what we like, we boot him out. But you can't do that with your Pope, can you?"

Father John: "Well ... the thing about our faith is that we've got two thousand years of tradition about us. And, presumably, we believe and we pray and we hope and we trust that the Pope, and his advisors, and indeed all the way down to poor little us living in Brisbane, or wherever we're listening, that we are all trying to walk on the same steps of that tradition."

Kevin: "The tradition is pretty horrifying. The Pope--"

Father John: "The tradition has a lot of flaws about it, but there are also a lot of good things about it as well. That's what the whole week has been about: celebrating some of the plusses of it."

Kevin: "Well, I didn't hear him say anything which I would regard as being useful or helpful. For example, on the front page of *The Australian*, a few days ago, the Pope's advice for Australia was that we should 'get together and make a better country' ... I mean, thanks very much Mr. Pope! He says that we should try and see Christ in the stranger, but he doesn't explain what "Christ" is, and how on earth Christ can be in the stranger."

Father John: "I thought he tried to explain a bit of that in his homily at the Beatification Mass."

Kevin: "Well he didn't do a very good job."

Father John: "He didn't, eh? Alright, well, that's your opinion on that one, Kevin, and you're certainly welcome to it. We'll see what the listeners have to say on that one."

Kevin: "Thank you."

Father John: "Thank you for calling."⁹⁰

CALL SIX - Dan Rowden

- Atheism -
22nd January 1995

In this particular conversation Dan had to contend with not one, but two priests, and, as you can imagine, he found the going very rough indeed. Although he tried valiantly to chip away at the solid rock wall of delusion which all Chris-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

tians love to blockade themselves in, it was to no avail. They desperately cling to the belief that there are only three basic positions one could possibly take on the question of God - theism, atheism, and agnosticism. I mean, how shallow can you get? All three are obviously false and have nothing at all to do with wisdom.

- D.Q

Father John: "Hello, Danny."

Dan: "G'day, John. How are you?"

Father John: "Pretty good, thanks."

Dan: "Mate, I want to talk about atheism. It's been mentioned once or twice during the program."

Father John: "Hmm, hmm."

Dan: "It was mentioned earlier that atheism is basically a disbelief in God. I want to challenge that because I think it is a wholly inadequate definition of what atheism is."

Father John: "What does the dictionary say, Danny? Maybe one of our listeners can look it up in the dictionary. I haven't got one here, but I would love to see what it says in there."

Dan: "Well, I don't really care what the dictionary says."

Father John: "Alright. You're a thinker, that's good."

Dan: "Absolutely. Most dictionary definitions of such things are themselves wholly inadequate - they're just for vernacular use only. An atheist is not someone who just simply goes around rejecting concepts of God. A true atheist is someone who rejects everything which is false. Now, to either say that God definitely exists--"

Father John: "Hang on, Danny. I don't know if we can accept that one. I mean, I believe in God, and I would hope that I would reject everything which is false, but that doesn't make me an atheist."

Dan: "Okay--"

Father John: "You could believe in anything. You could believe in not believing in God, and just because ... in other words, you're saying that anyone who rejects everything which is false is atheistic. That's a pretty easy one to shoot down, Dan."

Dan: "Well, no, it depends on whether you're--"

Father John: "It depends on nothing. You just said it."

Dan: "Well, okay, you can reject things--"

Father John: "Do you want to have a think about it and call back when you've got the thing ready?"

Dan: "No, I don't. What you're forgetting is that it's possible to think wrongly. I mean, you can say something is false and you can be wrong about that."

Father John: "True."

Dan: "To say that God definitely exists, or does not exist, is to say that you know what is ultimately real. So a true atheist, by saying that God definitely does not exist, is saying that he knows what is ultimately real. The vast majority of people who label themselves as atheists are not atheists. They're actually agnostic, or what I would call a 'floater' - a person who rejects God because they haven't really thought about it. But an atheist is someone who has thought about the fundamentals of existence, and rejects God because he knows that God is impossible. That is to say, he knows what is ultimately true. That is what a genuine atheist is. I mean, the boundaries between agnosticism and atheism have been destroyed over the years, and I think the secular community is as guilty in this as any religious group."

Father John: "Alright, I'd be happy to respond to that, but we've got Father Bill here. I don't know if he'd like to react ... ?"

Father Bill: "Oh well, simply to say that the word 'atheism' does mean rejection of God. That's what it means. A theist is a person who believes in God, an atheist is a person who does not believe in God, and an agnostic is a person who doesn't really know whether God exists or not. That's what the words means."

Dan: "No. I find those definitions--"

Father Bill: "They're not definitions; that's what the meaning of the words are. Theos means 'God', a-theos means someone who doesn't accept God. That's what the word means."

Dan: "Right, because they're not definitions, that is why I find them inadequate. You see, to me--"

Father John: "Danny. Danny. You've just got to give a bit here. That's what they mean. Do you know what the word 'cup' means?"

Dan: "Well, okay, I'm telling you--"

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

Father John: "Do you know what the word 'pencil' means? Well, this is what the word 'atheist' means."

Father Bill: "I think I'd be prepared to agree with what Dan says when he says that a lot of people who call themselves 'atheists' are in fact agnostic. I think that's probably true. You also have to make a distinction between theoretical and practical atheists. A theoretical atheist is someone who has genuinely come to the belief that there is no God, whereas a practical atheist might be one, yes, who might believe in God but acts in such a way, or lives in such a way, that he ignores any law of God. So yes, there are distinctions to be made, I'll agree with that."

Dan: "I simply think that those distinctions are extremely important, because coming to a firm decision one way or the other is the most important thing any person can do in their lives."

Father John: "Hey, Danny, can you just hang on one tick?"

Dan: "Yes."

Father John: "Can you hang on? Because we've got Judy who's looking up her dictionary. You there, Judy?"

Judy: "Yes, Father."

Father John: "How are you going?"

Judy: "Good, thanks. Yourself?"

Father John: "You've looked up the word 'atheism'?"

Judy: "Yes."

Father John: "What does it say?"

Judy: "The belief that there is no God."

Father John: Does it say anything after that, like if you want to believe "this", you can?

Judy: "Ah, no."

[Giggles]

Father John: "It says, 'The belief that there is no God'?"

Judy: "Yes. It says, 'Without God; the belief that there is no God.'"

Father John: "Alright. Do you want to make another comment about anything else, Judy? Or did you just want to tell us that?"

Judy: "That's all."

Father John: "Because I'm very grateful for that, but otherwise I'd hang up, or I can leave you on hold and come back to you."

Judy: "No, no, that's all, Father."

Father John: "Alright, Judy, thanks very much for that, because it's really important that we hear it. Danny, you there?"

Dan: "Yes."

Father John: "What did you think of that one?"

Dan: "Well, as I said before, I'm not the least bit interested in dictionary meanings of these things."

Father John: "You're going to publish your own dictionary, are you?"

Dan: "Well, when you start defining your spirituality by what is said in the dictionary, then you have no spirituality."

Father John: "But, Danny, you ring up other weeks and you ask me about faith, and you tell me that, as I understand faith - or 'truth', we've had - that's been a classic one - that the way we understand truth is not the way we really should be understanding truth. Where is your objectivity now, Dan, that we hear every other week? You know, you tell me that some things are just fixed and immutable, well, here's the definition of an English word that you don't even accept. Everyone in the world accepts it and you don't."

Dan: "Well, this is because definitions are not fixed and immutable. The only thing that is is Ultimate Reality."

Father John: "How would we ... yeah, here we go ... how would we ever communicate if we didn't have language. I mean, people like Wittgenstein dedicate the whole of their lives to study of language. Language has fixed meanings. I mean, they're words. That's how we communicate, Dan. That's how you and I talk over the radio and the telephone."

Dan: "That's true, but language is often hopelessly inadequate as well."

Father John: "That's true too."

Dan: "Especially when it comes to ultimate issues."

Father John: "Yes, that is true. Danny, thanks very much for your call."

Dan: "No worries."

Father John: "Good to talk to you, tonight. Bye-bye."⁹¹

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

- Faith III -

22nd January 1995

*I too met up with Father Bill and I too encountered the same sort of problems that Danny had. Having Bill on the program did have one virtue, though - he was able to articulate in a far clearer way than McEwin the Christian abhorance of reason.**

- D.Q

Father John: "We've got time for one more ... we might take line one, Johnno, because this is David from West End, who rings up regularly about faith, and we've got to let Father Bill go home. Hello, David."

David: "Yes, hello."

Father John: "How are you?"

David: "Fine."

Father John: "Now, David, every week you give me a call, and you and I try and battle away about this whole issue of faith, and 'objective reality' ... is that the phrase that ...?"

David: "Close enough."

Father John: "Yes, that's the one that you use."

David: "Yes."

Father John: "Alright, do you want to make a comment tonight? Because I'm just pleased that Father Bill is here and he might be able to offer a different advice than what I normally do."

David: "Okay, I heard Bill talking before about faith, and he mentioned that faith is about having trust in a person or a cause or something like that, but to me the principle underpinning of all faith must be directed towards Truth. If your faith is not directed towards Truth, then it's a false faith - you're chasing something false. So this is the most important thing. It's not enough to say that faith is just a trust in 'something', because then you could say that Hitler had faith - he had faith that he'd conquer Europe. So it's not an adequate definition of faith. It must be directed towards Truth. Truth is the heart and soul of the spiritual life."

Father Bill: "I think if I may just butt in, David."

David: "Okay then."

Father Bill: "For there to be authentic genuine faith, that's true. But there were people who had faith in Hitler. Now their faith may have been misplaced, but, rightly or wrongly, they had faith in him. So when I say faith is commitment to a cause, I'm not necessarily saying that that is good faith or bad faith. But I agree with you that if faith is to be authentic it has to be a search for the good and the true."

David: "No, no, just the Truth."

Father Bill: "Oh well, Truth is goodness."

David: "Well, that's debatable."

Father Bill: "Well, alright, we won't debate it now."

Father John: "Everything is debatable with you, David! You haven't got one of those dictionaries that Danny's got too, have you?"

David: "Well, no, we make up our own definitions to suit us."

Father John: *[laughs]* "We know that, mate! We know that! There you are, you've said in black and white."

David: "Yes, but I'd say that you do the same. Christians do the same."

Father John: *[laughs]* "... Alright ..."

David: "Take the concept of God. In my view, Christians render the word 'God' meaningless. Because one minute they say that God is bigger than everything; the next minute they say that God just exists in good people; the next minute they say that God is the inconceivable; the next minute they say that God is a sort of Creator who looks lovingly upon the human race - I mean, they just make a total farce of the word 'God'!"

Father John: "I think the bottom line of it, they just say God is ... dot, dot, dot."

David: "Well! God is ... !?"

* Father John McEwin, "Faith III," *Talk-Back with Radio Priest* [Radio Broadcast]. 4BC, 22 January 1995.

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

Father John: "Because we can never describe what God is."

Father Bill: "One person made the comment earlier on, David, that human language in the long run, when we talk about God, is inadequate, and the fact that we can say all of these different things about God is simply, to my mind anyway, a proof of that fact. You can't sum up God in any one phrase or in any one sentence."

David: "Well, no, there's a difference between language falling short and making totally contradictory statements or having totally contradictory beliefs."

Father Bill: "Hmm, but to say that God is transcendent is not a contradiction in my mind to saying that God is very close to us. God is both."

David: "Well, to say that God is transcendent is to say that God is separate - God is separate from Nature or the world - and that, to my mind, makes Him very far away. Whereas if you say that God is the same as Nature, well then, God is infinitely close to us - I mean, He is us! There is a world of difference."

Father Bill: "Yes, but I don't see that as contradictory. If I were to say that you were both close and far away, then it might be a contradiction - but when I say it about God, then I don't see anything contradictory about that."

David: "Well, yes, you don't, but it depends on how much you value reason. I mean, if you don't--"

Father John: "Do you want to tell him that he's ignorant too, like you told me one other week?"

Father Bill: [laughs]

Father John: "Tell him. I'd get great pleasure out of that, if you told Father Bill that he was ignorant."

David: "Well, yes, I'd say you're ignorant because--"

Father John: [laughs] "Thank you."

Father Bill: [laughs]

David: "Because--"

Father John: "You're making my night, David."

David: "Because you value ignorance. This is the key thing. You actually value ignorance, and it props up faith."

Father Bill: "Props up faith ... uh uh."

David: "That's right. Because if you didn't value ignorance, then you would be encouraging both yourself and everybody else to actually reason in earnest, to actually want to come to understand the Truth. Now look, I say that the Truth is there to be known. It is there for the finite mind to know it. But I see that Christians turn people away from that because they value their ignorance. They say that, 'nothing can be known, you've got to have a faith--'"

Father Bill: "So you think that all reality is totally comprehensible, eh?"

David: "Yes, absolutely."

Father Bill: "Fair enough. That's a point of view."

Father John: "It is, David, and you keep struggling with it. Could I just ask one final comment? Do you think the Pope is ignorant too, David?"

David: "I never think about the Pope."

Father John: "Come on, have a think now."

David: "Alright, it is the blind leading the blind."

Father Bill: [laughs]

Father John: "So, he's ignorant? Seven languages, the whole lot?"

David: "Absolutely."

Father John: "Alright, good on you, David."

David: "Okay then. Cheerio."

CALL EIGHT - David Quinn

- The Meaning of God -
29th January 1995

In this call, I tried to introduce a more abstract line of reasoning, dealing with the nature of existence and God. I knew at the time it was a futile exercise - indeed, it felt like I was trying to explain the axioms of geometry to a bunch of chimpanzees. Still, I decided to persist for the sake of that hypothetical young person.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

- *D.Q*

Father John: "... you can pick up the phone and talk to us this evening. And in the continuing saga of God and the reality of - hello, David."

David: "Hello."

Father John: "How are you?"

David: "I'm not too bad."

Father John: "Good."

David: "I want to talk about something which was brought up in our conversation last week, with you and Bill. If you recall, we were talking about how I thought Christians make the term 'God' meaningless, because you have all these contradictory concepts of God - such as being inconceivable, being a conscious being who loves us, being bigger than everything, something which exists in good people, etcetera. And you and Bill basically stated that you didn't see any problems with this, that you saw God as being indescribable, or God is ... dot, dot, dot. Do you recall this?"

Father John: "Yeah, and you've spent the week thinking about it, David, and so what's the response you'd like to make?"

David: "I think about these things all the time, actually."

Father John: "Well, that's good! You're struggling with it. I think it's good."

David: "Yeah, okay. So I find this whole attitude extraordinary, myself, because Christians, like all of us, depend on reason for every aspect of their existence - like making decisions about getting married, career decisions, avoiding life-threatening situations - in every aspect of their existence, they're using reason. But when it comes to the most important thing in the world, the most important thing of everything - namely, God - all of that goes out the window. I find this totally extraordinary."

Father John: "Just before we go down that track, why would you say that God is the most important thing when you don't believe in God?"

David: "No, I believe in God, no doubt about it."

Father John: "Oh, you do believe in God?"

David: "Yes, but--"

Father John: "What is your stance, David? Just for other listeners and for myself ..."

David: "I define God as that which is ultimately real. So the ultimate reality of everything is what I call 'God'. And this is a fairly reasonable definition, because if your God, say, is not ultimately real, then He is ultimately false - and I, for one, wouldn't want to have anything to do with Him."

Father John: "Yeah, I don't really understand that, to be perfectly honest. What do you mean by 'the ultimate reality of everything'?"

David: "Well, what I mean is the eternal truth, the--"

Father John: "Yeah, I know, but if you could just skip the code language and just give it in ordinary, human colloquial terms so I can understand it."

David: "I thought I was using colloquial terms."

Father John: "Well, you know, 'ultimate truth' and 'infinite reality' ... that's not the sort of language we use everyday, is it?"

David: "Okay, we exist in a world. Okay?"

Father John: "Hmm, hmm. David: So there must be something ultimately real about it, and I define that as God. The source of everything. Okay?"

Father John: "... well ..."

David: "So what I find with your attitude, and with Christians in general, is that--"

Father John: "In our beliefs, not so much our attitude."

David: "Well, it's an attitude, actually. It's not a belief. The beliefs come out of the attitude."

Father John: "It's a belief, actually."

David: "No, it's an attitude."

Father John: "Alright, alright ..."

David: "I'll say why. God has to refer to a reality, and if we want to know what that reality is, you have to respect the basic law of existence, which is the law of contradiction. For example, a clay cup exists because it is a clay cup - it's not a tree or a cloud or something. It's a very, very basic point. Anything which exists, it exists as it is and it's not something else."

Father John: "It's what we call metaphysics."

David: "No, it's just a basic--"

Father John: "But the study of that is what we call metaphysics."

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

David: "Fair enough. So when we come to the subject of God, this is totally thrown out the window. If you say that there are no contradictions in your God, that He is beyond all contradiction, then what you're doing is you're making Him a non- entity. You're actually worshipping nothing at all. So what I find with Christians who say that 'God is ... dot, dot, dot', is that they project their own fantasy onto the word 'God' - you know, they fill in the blank space. So whatever they believe in, whatever vague dream happens to

give them the most pleasure, this is what they call 'Christianity'. And I object to this strenuously."

Father John: "Righto, David, thank you for that. It's an ongoing debate. It's a good thing that we struggle with it. I enjoy chatting with you, and maybe we'll take it one more step next week, eh?"

David: "Alright, then."

Father John: "Alright, thanks for calling."

David: "Cheerio."

Father John: "Bye-bye."⁹²

CALL NINE - David Quinn

- Footprints -
5th February 1995

The first part of this call deals with the poem, "Footprints". It is a staple in the Christian diet, giving them the means to experience ever more intensely their beloved self-pity and the shedding of tears. What happened was that a man had rung up Father John earlier and described how he no longer believed in God because He did not come to his aid when his wife died. This prompted a woman to ring up and read out the poem in question, which basically describes the following story: In the afterlife, Jesus and a person are surveying the person's life, which are represented by footprints in the sand. There are not one set of footprints but two, lying side by side as if two people had just recently walked hand in hand along the beach. When Jesus was asked why there were two sets of footprints, he replied that one of them was the person's and the other was his own - implying that Jesus had accompanied the person throughout every step of his life. A point is reached, however, where one of the set of footprints suddenly disappear, as if one of the imagined walkers had suddenly disappeared out of existence, and this point coincides with a major crisis which happened in the person's life. The person asks Jesus, "Why, Lord, did you leave me just when I needed you most?" and Jesus answered, "I did not leave you, my child. It was I who carried you when you no longer could stand on your own." The woman read out the poem in suitably heart-rendering tones and McEwin capped it off nicely by playing a beautiful piece of piano music just as the last line of the poem finished. All in all, an impressive display of theatrical twaddle.

- D.Q

Father John: "... Bob was there, Bob has gone. Either Bob didn't want to talk to me or something has happened. Hello, David."

David: "Hello."

Father John: "Welcome, David. Welcome back, David."

David: "Yes, hello. I'd like to talk about the Bible tonight, but before I do, I'd just want to express my view about that poem, 'Footprints'. I find the sentiments expressed

in it totally revolting. I mean, I wouldn't want a bar of the person who followed me along the beach like that, and who acted like that. In my view, Jesus came down to earth to try and encourage us into the Kingdom of Heaven - he described something really lofty, for the few. But in a poem like that, it describes a matron who all he cares about is helping the weak and the sick. It's totally blasphemous."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Father John: "Alright, rather than me responding to that, I'll leave that to the listeners - 131332 - while you go forward, David. But you find 'Footprints' totally revolting."

David: "That's right. Totally unspiritual. Now I want to talk about the Bible. In the past few weeks I've been talking about how I thought faith was useless and the Christian God was meaningless, well, I also find a dependence on the Bible is useless. There are just so many different interpretations of the Bible. When you look through history, you can see that some people thought, for example, Jesus was espousing some sort of socialist principles; some people in America believe that he was a capitalist; you have the fundamentalists who believe that God created the world six thousand years ago; you have the Quakers, or the more mystical types, who believe God is more of a mystical principle. So you have all these different philosophies and they can all find sustenance for their philosophies in the Bible. So this, in my view, is what makes it such a popular book. Anybody who has a pet belief-system can go to the Bible and find support for it. It's just completely useless, it really is."

Father John: "Hang on. Everybody finds support in it, so that makes it completely useless?"

David: "Yes, because, assuming that the writers were wise and that the Bible is a wise book, there must be some sort of correct interpretation of what the book means, and so virtually every interpretation of it espoused through history is wrong. There can be only one correct interpretation, and that is the wise interpretation."

Father John: "Hmm."

David: "So what would be far more useful, instead of encouraging people to get attached to the Bible, would be to actually encourage people to be able to judge truthfully and correctly for themselves, to develop a mind which is able to make correct interpretations - not only of the Bible, but of anything at all, any information which comes their way. That would be far, far more useful. And then a person could determine for themselves what is actually wise in the Bible."

Father John: "I suppose the weak link in all of this, David, is that you seem to be at

odds to impose your beliefs on everybody else, whereas I think most listeners - and certainly, I hope, in the many discussions you and I have had on Sunday nights, I would make no pretence to ram my understandings upon you. You know, I think that you're obviously a young intelligent person, and you can make your own decision, but why is it that you do not allow me and our listeners to make our own decisions? Why is it that we have to do what you want? Like, we have to throw the Bible away because it's irrelevant in your eyes, which we accept. But can I just respectfully ask, what gives you the right to tell us that it's irrelevant in our eyes? Because, quite frankly, I, and I suspect there's one or two listeners, who don't necessarily find the Bible irrelevant."

David: "Well, there's some good stuff in the Bible, I readily agree with that, but what I object to is that I see virtually all Christians as being totally immoral people."

Father John: "Do you know all Christians, do you, David?"

David: "Well, let me put it this way--"

Father John: "No, let me put it this way. You just can't make gross generalizations like that. You might know some Christians who you find immoral - fair enough."

David: "No. I think that anybody who has the slightest inkling of what God is wouldn't have a bar of Christianity. So, for example, it's like a policeman who--"

Father John: "Alright. You're entitled to that view. That's okay."

David: "Yes, so it's--"

Father John: "Righto, leave it that. You don't have to go any further. We understand what you're saying ... what's the ...?"

David: [laughs] "Alright, then. I'll ring up next time."

Father John: "Alright. Are you going back to the thinking board now, and come up with another one?"

David: "Yes."

Father John: "You keep struggling with it."

David: "I will."

Father John: "Good on you, David."

David: "Bye-bye."⁹³

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

- Overpopulation -

12th February 1995

Here is a truly comical conversation in which McEwin inadvertently spills the beans. As anyone with the slightest bit of conscience knows, the Pope is a figure of ridicule, a clown who can be entertaining at times but whom nobody takes seriously at all. Not even the Catholics take him seriously, as McEwin makes perfectly clear. What the following conversation reveals so plainly is the Christian revulsion at the thought of having to take responsibility for humanity's future.

- D.Q

Father John: "131332 is our telephone number, if you'd like to respond to a couple of those issues, or indeed anything else that's on your mind tonight. Hello, Danny."

Dan: "G'day, John. How are you?"

Father John: "Pretty good, thanks."

Dan: "I'd like to touch on the initial topic that Peter raised tonight about overpopulation--"

Father John: "Good."

Dan: "--and the Church's reluctance to accept technology, in terms of contraception."

Father John: "Hmm, hmm."

Dan: "A couple of points that you raised: firstly, this idea that there are people starving in the world is due to a matter of distribution of food. I agree with that totally - it's hardly even contentious - but, the thing is, it's not the point. It is actually a peripheral issue to the central one, that of damage to the environment by resource demand - which stems from overpopulation. Again, I think, this is an issue which is beyond any kind of contention, and talking about distribution actually dodges around the central issue. And what I don't understand is ... obviously, as you say, the Church doesn't speak against birth-control. In other words, it supports things like the 'rhythm method' - which is fine - but I don't understand it's reluctance to accept other forms of technology. To me, it's slightly irrational. The Church is saying that it's okay for human beings to resort to mathematics, but not to physics or chemistry, and I don't quite understand the logic of that."

Father John: "Who knows where we'll be in X years time, Danny. And, I suppose, my job here is not to tell you the latest John McEwin theory, but to do my best to represent what the Catholic Church holds - if that's what I am asked. It's something I know a bit about. These rules are man-made, and who

knows where we'll be under a new Pope, and a new regime. Priests could be married tomorrow, and artificial contraception could be all the go, and all the rest of it. But I suppose all I'm trying to do is just give you some insight into how these decisions are arrived at. You, and indeed there would be a very, very large percentage of Catholic women who wouldn't accept that. Sometimes, I suppose, you feel like you're defending the indefensible, because nobody really believes it. You see, this is where the Pope is very strong on what he calls 'objective truth' and 'natural law' - that some things are right, full stop. It doesn't matter how we feel, or what's happening in the twentieth century, or what's the latest technology, some things are right. An obvious example would be the sanctity of life. Like, murder is out. So there's something we can all reach a common agreement on. So this would be another ... almost like a manifestation of that, I suppose, in his own eyes, or in his advisors' eyes, that ... well, this is just an objective truth. This is the way it is."

Dan: "... Well, I have--"

Father John: *[laughs]* "Pretty hard, eh?"

Dan: "I have a certain amount of sympathy for the concept that some things are objectively true, and that's the end of it, but I fail to see how this sort of issue falls into that category. The attitude that the Pope has, and people like Mother Theresa, in respect to these issues, is not only not rational, but is bloody dangerous. The damage that these attitudes do is palpable. It is neither conducive to the interim nor the future well-being of humanity generally. To say that the rhythm method is okay ... see, the rhythm method is an artifice. It's bloody artificial, if you want to go down that line of thought."

Father John: "The rhythm method is ...?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Dan: "The rhythm method is ultimately an artifice."

Father John: "In terms of ...?"

Dan: "It's just a human construct. It's a human method of avoiding procreation."

Father John: "Hmm. Well, that's exactly what it is - a method of birth control, a method of preventing conception."

Dan: "That's right."

Father John: "But it's a natural one, would be the way the argument goes, as distinct from an artificial one."

Dan: [laughs] "Yes, but you couldn't possibly, rationally, make that distinction--"

Father John: "Dan, I'm just telling you the way it is."

Dan: "Yes, I realize that, but I'm not really saying this to you. I'm saying it in a broad sense, that that attitude is just completely indefensible."

Father John: "Alright, Danny. Can we leave that one there and see what other people have to say?"

Dan: "Not a problem."

Father John: "Good to talk to you, and you've raised some good points."

Dan: "Thanks, John. Bye."⁹⁴

CALL ELEVEN - David Quinn

- Soren Kierkegaard -

19th February 1995

I decided, in this call, to introduce the concept of the wise man in the shape of Soren Kierkegaard, in order to dispel the myth that I am always negative. In spite of what McEwin says, there were callers last week who complained that I am always critical, that I am always knocking things down without advocating anything positive. How they come to think this is beyond me, since every week I am stressing the importance of Truth and God.

- D.Q

Father John: "... he's copped plenty in the past, and I'm sure he's happy to do it with Father John here tonight. Hello. David."

David: "Yes, hello."

Father John: "How are you?"

David: "I'm pretty good. I'd like to talk about Soren Kierkegaard. Have you heard of this fellow?"

Father John: "I have."

David: "A Danish fellow from last century."

Father John: "A great philosopher."

David: "Well, a great thinker, yes. I'm prompted by callers last week who said that all I talk about are negative things, that I never say anything positive. I actually find this quite surprising because--"

Father John: "I don't know if they were totally referring to you, David."

David: "Yeah, okay--"

Father John: "Because I wouldn't agree with it. I think you try and debate, don't you, which is healthy in many instances."

David: "That's right. I'm all for rational discussion."

Father John: "Yep, alright. Give us a bit of it tonight."

David: "Well, okay. Soren Kierkegaard is really the only Christian that I've come across whom I respect. He was a man who--"

Father John: "That's a big leap for you!"

David: "He's the one person who I think actually understood Jesus. I've not come across any other Christian at all who, in my view, has understood Jesus - and I throw into that category your Popes, and your Mother Therasas, and your St John of the Crosses, and the whole lot. It is really only Kierkegaard who actually understood what it means to renounce the world, to sacrifice your entire life for the sake of the Truth. Like he--"

Father John: "What does he say, David? I'm sure lot's of listeners, me included, would like to know how he understood Jesus."

David: "Alright. He said that there were two basic relationships with God, and, on the highest level, is that of the apostle. The apostle is someone who actually follows Jesus Christ, who actually puts the teachings of Jesus into practice, and that means renounc-

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

ing, throwing your whole being into the Truth, and enduring all the sufferings which come about because of it, as outlined in the New Testament - being hated by all men, being persecuted, even being put to death sometimes."

Father John: "Hmm, hmm."

David: "And at a lower level, for someone who is not up to that strenuous type of life, is admitting that one is not strong enough to go down that path, but is nevertheless willing to speak the Truth. Now, Kierkegaard put himself into the latter category. He saw that he was too weak. Even though he spent his whole life thinking about God - he never got married and spent every waking hour, virtually, thinking about what God is and what Christianity was - he saw that he was too weak to actually become an apostle. But at the same time, he was infinitely above everyone around him. When he looked at the Christians around him, he saw that they were petty and hypocritical. Now I agree with Kierkegaard totally. When I look at Christians nowadays, I see that they are very petty and very hypocritical. So, for example, the New Testament stresses the giving up of everything you hold dear for the sake of God - this is the real spiritual path. It's very, very simple. But when I look at Christians, they--"

Father John: "That's very literal, David. I think what the implication is - and I certainly don't want to water down your message, or indeed the Lord's message - but I think it's about detachment. The thing about our faith, at least, is that the world is a good place."

David: "Well, no, Jesus was very, very adamant on this point. You cannot serve two Masters."

Father John: "Right."

David: "It's either God or the world."

Father John: "Right."

David: "And you can't do both. He says elsewhere that whoever hangs onto his life, will lose it, and whoever loses his life for "my" sake, will gain it."

Father John: "Yeah, alright, that's all about detachment, to my ears."

David: "It's about renunciation--"

Father John: "But it's not about close your eyes and you walk past Myers. You know, like, you're living in the world."

David: "That's right."

Father John: "We can't all go and live in a cave."

David: "So I interpret it that we should reject everything which is false. The world is false because--"

Father John: "So how do you make a difference?"

David: "A difference between what?"

Father John: "How do you make a difference to the world?"

David: "Well, by becoming as truthful as possible. The more truthful you are, the more good will spill out into the world."

Father John: "Alright, so you have to do that in the world, don't you?"

David: "Yes, totally. I totally agree. I'm not talking about being a hermit or anything like that. No way. It's a big renunciation within the mind."

Father John: "Alright. Well, as always, interesting."

David: "I'd just like to make one more comment which is related to it."

Father John: "Okay, one quick point."

David: "When I look at your program - and I regard it to be a representative slice of Christianity - I see it as very, very petty. I've listened to your program for a couple of months, and I've never, ever heard a listener ring up and say, 'I really want to become wise. Every day I pray to God that I will become perfect, that I may actually do some real good in the world.' Instead, I just hear people phoning in their petty complaints - like, praying to God about their cancers and things, something really, really petty. It's disgusting."

Father John: "... yeah, well ... the listeners can take that ..."

David: "Alright, then."

Father John: "What about, David ... what's petty about Brendan Rodgers spending X years of his life in a Shangai concentration camp with twenty of his Chaplain mates and ... you know, like, I just think that maybe we can dismiss these people as petty, to use your word--"

David: "Well, they are."

Father John: "--and they're modern-day heroes!"

David: "Well, I'd say they are petty, because if they're promoting, say, something like what passes for Christianity today, then they're actually promoting the causes for

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

violence and war. Because what passes for Christianity today is extremely selfish and egotistical and petty-minded, and out of all that comes violence and war."

Father John: "Alright, once again you've challenged us to live better lives and that's a

good thing in itself. Thanks for calling, David."

David: "Okay, then."

Father John: "Alright, mate. Talk to you again."⁹⁵

CALL TWELVE - David Quinn

- Buddhism/Christianity -

26th February 1995

"Interfaith dialogue" is a fashionable thing at the moment. In the following conversation we have Father Bill Johnson, an Irish Catholic priest, who "dialogues" with Buddhists and meditates in their temples. It is all a complete waste of time, since the Buddhists he deals with are not in fact Buddhists, and Father Bill himself is not in fact a Christian. They are all charlatans who live only for the pleasures of masturbation. How do I know this? By looking!

- D.Q

Father John: "Good on you. Welcome to the program, David. Can I say also, before you get going, for any of our listeners who may have just joined us, Father Bill Johnson is our special guest and he is an international expert on East-West religion. Now, David, I know from your voice, you ring up every week trying to discuss the meaning of life, don't you? Well, so here's a good other opinion you may be able to draw on tonight."

David: "Alright, I'll talk to Bill then."

Father John: "Yep, go for your life! No complaints from me."

David: "Okay, I was just wondering if you actually claim to understand the truth of Buddhism?"

Father Bill: "You see, inevitably, I am an outsider to Buddhism. I'm in dialogue. And I believe to really understand a religion, you have to be a part of it, you have to be within. For a non-Christian ... it's very difficult for a non-Christian, really - they can get an intellectual knowledge, but the inside knowledge is different. I do not claim to understand Buddhism as an insider, but I am dialoguing, listening, learning, and growing in knowledge of Buddhism."

David: "Well, in your studies of Buddhism you would have come across the fact that the Buddhists don't believe in a God in any way. They reject all concepts of God."

Father Bill: "Well, I wouldn't say that. I would say that Buddhists don't believe in

God in the sense that Jews and Muslims and Christians do - that's true. But I believe that they have some sense of the reverence, let's say, towards the Buddha, reverence towards some power or reality at the depths of one's being and at the depths of the universe. So I would not say, for example, that Buddhists are atheists. I would not say that."

David: "We should make a distinction between popular Buddhism of the rituals and the temples and so forth--"

Father Bill: "Yes."

David: "--and the pure, Buddhist philosophy."

Father Bill: "Yes."

David: "If you look at the pure, Buddhist philosophy, which is what I call genuine Buddhism, it is atheistic in that it rejects everything to do with God. They say that supposing a God exists, some sort of God or Gods, they would be irrelevant. Compared to Ultimate Reality, these Gods are like us, finite creatures, and have nothing really to do with the spiritual path and understanding Reality."

Father Bill: "You see, I wouldn't use this word 'atheist', because the word 'atheist' is a Western word and is used for people who have rejected God, who don't believe in an after-life, who think that when you die, you die like a dog or whatever, and so on. But this is not true of Buddhism. They believe in an afterlife; they believe in reincarnation; they

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

also have a certain reverence. And the word 'atheist' is really for Buddhists a rather insulting word, I think, because it suggests that they don't have a genuinely religious sense. So I wouldn't use that word "atheist" to describe Buddhism."

David: "Well, I think it's useful because it brings out the contrast to Christianity. The two approaches of Buddhism and Christianity are completely different. Buddhism is a very rational philosophy - it praises reason and non-attachment and the understanding of Reality - whereas Christianity seems to praise a faith and a belief and a submission to an all-powerful being. They are completely different approaches."

Father Bill: "No, I wouldn't say that, because actually I have practiced meditation with Buddhists, side by side with Buddhists, and I believe that in the depths of our being we are the image of God, that God is present within. In Buddhism, they speak of the depths of their being as being the Buddha-Nature. They speak of enlightenment as realizing their Buddha-Nature. Now I'm not saying that these are exactly the same, by no means, but there certainly is a parallel, and we can do it together. I can't agree with you that it's a completely different approach."

Father John: "Can I just make one more point, David? I'm sure Bill would love to continue, but we do have a number of people hanging on. That's all."

David: "Okay, I would say that they were not real Buddhists that you were dealing with. In my view, there is a way in which Christianity and Buddhism are one, and that is in the teaching of non-attachment. Jesus preached nonattachment, and the Buddha preached non-attachment. But when I look into the world and see the various religions, I see that they have absolutely nothing to do with that teaching, because, you know, it is a very difficult and serious teaching. So by concentrating on meditation and on prayer, they are actually escaping the fundamental tenet of both of those religions."

Father Bill: "Well, you see, I would agree with you that they have in common this non-attachment. I like the term 'poverty of spirit', and, yes, nonattachment. But this is part of a way ... you see, Buddhist non-attachment

leads to enlightenment, to satori. You're letting go of all this and then you have this deep enlightenment. In Christianity, you have rather a similar approach - you're letting go of everything and then a deep realization, a deep wisdom, wells up from the depths of one's being. It's not a question of just making non-attachment an end-in-itself. It's a way."

David: "Well, non-attachment and wisdom are the same thing, so a Christian couldn't experience this enlightenment because he is clinging - he is clinging to his concepts of God, for example. So if you are going to cling on to anything at all, then you can't experience this enlightenment."

Father Bill: "Yes, I think that's true."

David: "So I see Christians, and Buddhists for that matter, encouraging people to cling. They're not actually--"

Father John: "What is the way forward, David? Like, every week we go through this and, quite seriously, what do you see as a path to enlightenment? If Christianity and Buddhism ... now, here's two major religions, in the broad sense of the terminology, that you dismiss. Like, how do you as a young person see the way forward?"

David: "Well, by having a burning faith in reason, and having the faith to--"

Father John: "So in oneself?"

David: "No, in reason. To uncover what is true and what is false."

Father John: "But you and I have spoken that reason, by definition, can be acutely subjective."

David: "No, no, no. If one has a genuine desire to understand Truth, then you can't go wrong - if it's a genuine desire. The only thing which makes you go wrong is if you get attached to various viewpoints and various concepts of reality. So I meet hardly anybody at all, whether they be public or private, who is actually serious about understanding reality."

Father John: "That might be a little bit harsh on people, but anyhow, you're certainly entitled to your viewpoint. We'll leave it there for tonight, eh, and no doubt we'll talk to you again next week. Thanks very much for calling."

David: "Alright."

Father John: "Okay, good night, David."⁹⁶

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

- Destroying Jesus -

5th March 1995

The one and only purpose of Christianity is to pulverise the reality of Jesus out of all existence. It has no other aim. Great cathedrals are built in honour of this noble purpose and heart-rendering hymns are sung in joyful celebration of its success. For there is no one, absolutely no one, who is hated more intensely by Christians than Jesus himself.

- D.Q

Father John: "Let's go to line three and we talk to David. Good evening, David."

David: "G'day. Hello, John."

Father John: "Welcome."

David: "I'd like to talk about the Christian worship of Jesus, since you've been talking about it. I'd like to touch on the way Christians conceive of Jesus as both divine and human. I find that this does a terrible injustice to what Jesus actually was."

Father John: [laughs] "Why does this not surprise me, David, coming from you? It's a terrible injustice to whom?"

David: "To Jesus. To what Jesus dedicated his life to. I think the way Christians conceive of Jesus totally destroys what Jesus was."

Father John: "What Jesus would have wanted."

David: "Yes. The fundamental injustice that Christians do is that they build Jesus up into some sort of Almighty God."

Father John: "Funny that."

David: "And so what that does is that it separates Jesus from us. Like, Jesus is so high - he's divine, he's almost God - and we are so low, we are like little insects in comparison. And the consequence of that is that it smashes the obligation to actually follow Jesus. Now--"

Father John: "David, we have a number of understandings or images that we use, and with all these things, as you're well aware, it's all models and analogies. Before you much further, they talk about the difference between transcendent and immanent. Transcendent, as you've just described it, is God on high - He is way up high and we're the lowly ones. Now that's one model of understanding God. Another one is immanent, and immanent means the God who walks with me, the God who is in everything I do, and the God who is, in a sense, sitting in this radio studio with me, and the God who is right beside you

on the end of the telephone. God doesn't have to be a million mile away."

David: "Yes, but I'd say that both those conceptions destroy what Jesus was. Instead of regarding Jesus as a God, we should regard him as what he was - a human being who dedicated his life to the highest wisdom. By making Jesus either divine-like or like us, it destroys that essential image of Jesus. Yes, he was completely different to us, yet he was a human being--"

Father John: "Hang on, how can you say that? You have to be consistent. How can he be completely different to us and yet be a human being?"

David: "He was different because he dedicated his life to the highest wisdom."

Father John: "Which is ultimate reality."

David: "Yes, that's right. Or God."

Father John: "I'm learning, eh?"

David: "Yes, you're doing well. So this makes him different. In everyday life, Jesus made choices for promoting wisdom, and each choice makes him more and more different to the rest of us - or at least to everybody who doesn't place wisdom as the highest value in life. So what Christians do is that they cut off, or create this barrier, between people and what Jesus was. It's a real shame. In the name of Christianity, Christians destroy what Christianity is supposed to be about."

Father John: "Alright, I'm not going to argue with you on this one. Obviously, I wouldn't necessarily concur with everything, but I certainly respect your stance and your struggle with it all. What if we left it there and see if other listeners would react or they might be able to respond accordingly."

David: "Alright."

Father John: "Would that be alright with you? Or do you want to make another point before you go?"

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

David: "Alright, I'll make another point, just for the hell of it. I just don't know how a Christian could pick up the New Testament and get any pleasure from reading the Gospels. Virtually everything Jesus attacks is what Christians are. They're the opposite of what Jesus was. So you get a quote like the 'Woe to you, Pharisees' ... I've got one here, quickly: 'You build the tombs for the prophets and it was your forefathers who killed them--'"

Father John: "'And inside you're blackened sepulchers' - is that the one you're after?"

David: "No, no, no. It's saying, 'You build the tombs--'"

Father John: "I was only trying to help you out."

David: "'--for the prophets and it was your forefathers who killed them, so you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did. They killed the prophets and you build their tombs.' That's how I see the Church. It's like a tomb."

Father John: "I think Bishop John Noble made a very good point before that most of us try to keep bashing home, but the Church - and you used the word - is not the Kingdom.

The Church is human beings. We are people who are doing our best. We are blackened sepulchers inside - we're sinful, we're hopeless, we know that - but we're trying. And please, God, one day, we will get to the end of this journey, this Christian journey that we're on, and that will be when we arrive at the Kingdom."

David: "You say you're trying and you're falling short. Now I'd respect that if I thought that was the case. But what Christians do is that they kill off the very, very first step of the spiritual life - which is the path of reason. In other words, actually trying to work out what God is, as opposed to some sort of image of God."

Father John: "Well, again, I really couldn't agree with you on that one, David, just knowing the enormity of the scholarship that's gone into two thousand years of history. I don't know whether it's quite that lightweight. Anyway, mate, I respect your opinion. Thank you for sharing it, and we'll see if other people want to react to it, eh?"

David: "Okay."

Father John: "No doubt, I'll talk to you next week. See you, David, bye-bye."⁹⁷

CALL FOURTEEN - David Quinn

- Miracles and Cults -

30th April 1995

By this stage, none of us had made a call to the program for a couple of months, and I for one saw no reason to do so again. The listeners of the program were just so mindless and dead that I had decided there was no longer any point. I mean, if there were at least one or two intelligent callers who showed a bit of life in them, well then, there would be cause for reconsideration. But there was nothing. In all the dreary hours I spent listening to the program, there was not one caller who I would regard as possessing even a smidgeon of intelligence. However, Kevin and I were organizing our own radio series by this time (to be called "The Hour of Judgment"), and even though it was not scheduled to begin for another couple of months, I was already turning my thoughts to the business of finding guests. So I rang up McEwin before the start of his Sunday night show and asked if he could help me find some Christians. Well, rather than giving me any firm commitment on that one, he instead begged me to make a call to his program and talk about the proposed series. I said I'd consider it. However, by the time I got off the phone I decided against it. "It is too demeaning", I thought, "to want to defend The Hour of Judgment to a Catholic priest, so I'll just have to ring up and attack Christianity instead." Just as I was wondering what line of reasoning I should pursue with my call, I heard someone ring in and inquire after the Church's position on the numer-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ous sightings of Mary which occur around the world each year. The good Father stated in response that the Church believes we shouldn't pay too much attention to every bizarre little happening and that the Christian faith should rest on something deeper. This amazing statement gave me the opening I was looking for.

- D.Q

Father John: "131332 is our telephone number, and everybody, of course, is welcome to have a say, whether you're a regular caller like Ken is, or whether you'd like to do it for the first time like Lex did. Hello, David."

David: "Hello."

Father John: "How are you?"

David: "Pretty good, thanks."

Father John: "Good. Welcome to the program."

David: "Yes. I was interested in what you and Lex were saying."

Father John: "Hmm, hmm. About Mary."

David: "Yes, about the visitations of Mary, and about how one shouldn't chase every bizarre happening that happens. The only problem is, I find that the very central, mainstream Christian belief is precisely the same thing. It's based on an apparition. Like, I've heard it said, especially over the last few weeks during Easter, that the central tenet of Christianity is the resurrection of Jesus."

Father John: "Hmm, hmm."

David: "So the whole faith of Christianity is based on an apparition of Jesus, which supposedly happened two thousand years ago, and it's no different to what happens in all these other countries in which occur these sightings of Mary."

Father John: "You're not real keen on this Christianity thing, are you? And aside from not being keen on it, what I just don't understand is why ... you know, you can't kind of ... let it go?"

David: "Well, because I think it is very, very important. An issue which is dear to my heart is the understanding of God."

Father John: "Hmm, hmm."

David: "And I see that Christians obstruct that - totally. They're against it. I try and--"

Father John: "If that's true ... let's go with what you say there, but for you - obviously, I don't agree with it and many of our listeners don't - but for you, that's fair enough, for you. Why don't you just say, 'Well, alright, it's not for me. I'll let it go, and I'll chase where I find peace or where I find God'?"

David: "Well, I consider that my peace involves ..."

Father John: "In the destruction of Christianity."

David: "Yes, everything which I believe is false. Jesus, for example, attacked all the religious leaders of his time, the Jewish leaders and so forth, because he thought they were obstructing the spiritual life of people. He said, 'Woe to you! You hold the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, yet you don't go in yourselves and you obstruct everyone else' - something along those lines. So I see Christians are very much the same. If Jesus came to earth today, he would speak against Christianity, in my view."

Father John: "I'm sure he would speak against numbers of things that we do, alright. I think we'd all have to agree with you there. We're not perfect. But that's the difference. We're not the Kingdom. We're the Church. We're just a group of human beings doing our best, and we fail."

David: "I think it's important to point out the inconsistencies. So--"

Father John: "Do you ever point out any of the plusses?"

David: "I haven't seen any, that's the only thing."

Father John: "You've never seen a plus?"

David: "No."

Father John: "You've never seen one plus in the entire Christian movement in two thousand years?"

David: "Um ... no."

Father John: "That's a shame. It's a big shame."

David: "That's right. I don't think Christians are serious about God."

Father John: "Alright. Well, you're certainly welcome to vent that view. I wonder if other people share that one, or maybe they might have a different tack."

David: "So you don't see the resurrection of Jesus in the same light as all these sightings of Mary?"

Father John: "No, not really."

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

David: "They're identical, don't you see? They're both based on sightings of some sort of apparition."

Father John: "Well, whether it was physical or otherwise, I suppose you and I weren't around to find out. But the difference between some of these alleged apparitions of Mary and the Resurrection is that the Church has certainly stated that this is the platform on which we will base our belief. Now, in many instances, we are dealing with the spiritual. Now, the minute you say that, everyone says, 'Ooooh, the spiritual', but what it is, is that it's the nonphysical, and our faith is non-physical. I could believe in the refrigerator, if I wanted to, but it just so happens that I don't want to believe in the refrigerator, I want to believe in Jesus. And this is a tenet of

our faith that collectively, in Her wisdom, the Church, which has been going for a fair while now, has said that we hang onto this one. Now, the Church has never said that about the alleged apparitions of Mary. Some people say that, but not Mother Church."

David: "The only difference between these bizarre little cults which spring up chasing Mary and the Christian Church is length of time and numbers of people. At bottom, the Christian Church is still a cult. It's chasing something bizarre, this resurrection of Jesus."

Father John: "Alright. That's certainly a stance, and we'll see what people have to say on that one, David."

David: "Alright then, John."

Father John: "Good on you, mate. Good to talk to you."⁹⁸

CALL FIFTEEN - David Quinn

- Mother's Day -
7th May 1995

Can the comedy get any richer? Here, in the following call, we have the highly amusing situation in which a Catholic priest, a man charged with the spiritual welfare of humanity, actually tries to dissuade me from putting the teachings of Jesus into practice. How compassionate of him!

- D.Q

Father John: "... What else is happening? The Budget is happening. Mother's Day is still happening - for the next two hours. I hope you never had to cook a meal today, Mum; I hope you never had to wash a plate today, Mum - but I suppose that's not Mother's Day, that'd be like the Second Coming if that ever happened, wouldn't it? But maybe you'd like to tell us what sort of a day you had today. Whatever's on your mind, 131332, you're very welcome to have a say. Open airwaves here - the sounds of the city with Father John McEwin. Let's go to the phones. Hello, David."

David: "Hello."

Father John: "How are you?"

David: "Not too bad, John."

Father John: "How was your day, David?"

David: "It's been the same as always - full of thought."

Father John: "Wasn't it with your mother?"

David: "No, no. Not at all. I was with my Mother Nature."

Father John: "Oh, okay."

David: "That's my only mother. Nature."

Father John: "Where's your mother? She's still alive?"

David: "Yes, she's still alive."

Father John: "But you're not linked too tightly there?"

David: "No, not really. We don't have much in common. I mean, I value extreme things, whereas she is very much middle of the road. So, yeah, I don't really communicate with my parents too often."

Father John: "Hmm, hmm."

David: "I wanted to make a comment about Monsignor Frawley, first off."

Father John: "Hmm, hmm."

David: "He's ninety-one years old, and he's been a priest for sixty-five years, and, as far as I can see, he's learnt nothing. He has no understanding of reality at all."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Father John: "Alright, well, if you are to stay on the line here, I'll tell you straight, David, that he's not here to defend himself, and be it Monsignor Frawley or anybody else--"

David: "Alright, but I--"

Father John: "I mean, feel very free to attack me. You can go for the jugular with me, because I'm a big boy and can defend myself. But he's not here, so that wouldn't be very charitable, would it?"

David: "Well, he's--"

Father John: "David, did you hear what I just said? Because you won't be saying another word publicly."

David: "Alright. The normal Christian advice, then, is that the biggest mistake of the world is people depending on themselves and not submitting to God. This is regarded as the root cause of the problems. It's a common Christian view."

Father John: "Hmm, hmm."

David: "I think that this is the most terrible advice possible, because--"

Father John: "Well, we would expect you to say that, David. There's no great revelation there. I mean, you say that consistently that you think Christianity is worst thing that has ever happened to this world, that it's responsible for all of its evils, that it's just a disaster."

David: "Well, Christianity is just an effect of a deeper problem, which is the attachment to the self. That is the root of Christianity. It's--"

Father John: "So what are you attached to? Yourself?"

David: "Wisdom."

Father John: "That's right, the ultimate truth."

David: "That's right, yes."

Father John: "How could I forget?"

David: "When Christians advocate submitting, the only reason one would submit to anything is to protect the self."

Father John: "Alright, rather than having the same conversation we've had for God knows how many times, could I just take us one step further: why the need to ring up consistently and - into it?"

David: "Well, the same reason why a person would attack the Nazis. There is extreme harm which comes from Christianity."

Father John: "What about forgetting Christianity, and you give us your wisdom. You tell us--"

David: "But this is my wisdom, you see."

Father John: "But your wisdom is a negative one. Your wisdom is 'anti-that'. Why don't you just leave it out of the equation - I mean, we can all live with the fact that you don't accept Christianity. I mean, that bothers me little. I respect whatever you do believe, but I've yet to find out what it is - other than it is ultimate truth and wisdom. Which is all very nice, but I wouldn't know ... I could look up my refrigerator and think that that's ultimate truth and wisdom - or an apple."

David: "Yeah, well, I've tried to explain it on this show, but it's very difficult because ..."

Father John: "Because of me?"

[Laughs]

David: "Because there's no love of reason."

Father John: "No love of reason. Alright."

David: Yes, so it's very difficult to explain it."

Father John: "Alright, what if I try and love reason for the next sixty seconds and you go for your life. Because I'm sure many other listeners would be very interested in hearing exactly what you're trying to say."

David: "Well, it is my goal in life to be perfectly truthful, and perfectly truthful means having no false thoughts or concepts. So this is what the spiritual path is all about. It is rejecting everything that is false in life. It's as simple as that."

Father John: "So would that be ... sorry, I did say sixty seconds."

David: "That's it."

Father John: "That's it?"

David: "That's the sum total of my wisdom."

Father John: [laughs] "That's it!"

David: "Yes, not submitting to anything at all - totally."

Father John: "Okay, would that be one of the reasons why you're not too close to your mum? Because you couldn't tolerate the fact that she might submit to something?"

David: "No, no, it's just my own love of God which leads me to everything I do and say."

Father John: "Huh! What was that word you just said?"

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

David: "Love of God. But it's a completely different God to your God, believe me."

Father John: "But how do you know that? Quite seriously, this is a philosophical question. We don't, or I don't - or I suppose I do - but we try not to put God in the little box, in the package."

David: "But you do. You put God in the vague category, in the don't-look-at-it, don't-get-anywhere-near-it, category. That's a category. Do you see? Whereas my God is transcendent. He is far beyond all that sort of stuff. Christians don't want anything to do with the transcendent God."

Father John: "Of course they do!"

David: "They say they do."

Father John: "Of course our God is transcendent. This is precisely what Mons was saying: don't rely on yourself, rely on the transcendent - the Other. Another."

David: "Well, there are millions of Gods. So you get Muslim fundamentalists, or whatever fundamentalists, who submit to some 'Other' - it could be anything - and you can see the effects of this: violence and--"

Father John: "What are some of the good things happening in your life, David? What are some of the plusses? Obviously, Mother's Day wasn't one of them."

David: "Just filling my mind with God is the big plus in my--"

Father John: "Is Christmas or Easter or your Birthday or ... ?"

David: "No, none of that sort of stuff."

Father John: "Does any of that ever happen?"

David: "No."

Father John: "Where is the joy for you? You're an intelligent young man - what do you get off on?"

David: "Understanding God."

Father John: "And that's just an enormous buzz?"

David: "It's my whole life."

Father John: "But is there any balance there? Is there any release? Is there any kind of enjoyment of what God created for you?"

David: "Enjoying the understanding of God."

Father John: "So it's all a mind thing? It's all intellectual?"

David: "It's all or nothing. So I actually put Jesus's teachings into practice. It's giving up everything, your whole life, loving the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your understanding--"

Father John: "Yes, but you could do that if you went to the races tomorrow."

David: "No. You see, if you really value and love wisdom, then you wouldn't want to do anything other than think and do and act in this wisdom."

Father John: "What if you value and really love health? I'd be concerned that you might burn out, if you just kept this sort of a pace up, and intensity."

David: "Well, no, I look after myself."

Father John: "I'm pleased to hear that. That's good. Well, I think we've got a little bit further along the way of the Great Debate between Christianity and it's antithesis."

David: "Okay, then."

Father John: "Good on you, David. You have a good week."

David: "Yes, you too."

Father John: "And do something that's a bit of fun, eh?"

David: "Okay."

Father John: "Good on you."⁹⁹

CALL SIXTEEN - David Quinn

- Teaching Christianity I -

14th May 1995

Unfortunately, my tape player missed the first couple of exchanges in this conversation, but it was clear right from the start that McEwin had made a decision during the week to withdraw his good-will towards me. For some reason, his heart had turned a corner since we last spoke and was no longer accommodating to my ideas. For a start, he kept me waiting on hold for nearly an hour - something which has never happened before - only to accept my call a couple of minutes before the news. Then, when he did finally speak to me, it was in such short tones that I imme-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

diately knew something was wrong. I could kiss my prepared debate on the role of women in Christianity goodbye. Whether it was because I had finally insulted him just that once too often or whether it was because his superiors had had a word in his ear, I do not know. What is certain is that he was no longer appreciative of my "struggle with it" and my "challenge to us to lead better lives".

D.Q

Father John: "... I'm sure you'd be the first to agree with that comment."

David: "Well, it depends--"

Father John: "Charisma bypasses us the minute we become ordained, doesn't it, David?"

David: "At least, your soul does, anyway."

Father John: "Our soul does ..."

David: *[laughs]* "I want to talk about Christianity and women, but before I do I just want to talk about education. I think one of the great problems of education in Christianity is that the teachers have no idea what they're talking about. I mean, they don't really know what to value, or what is significant in life. They have no--"

Father John: "They don't have any idea of what you think is important."

David: "Yeah, so that's why--"

Father John: "I just don't think it's fair for me to allow that to go to air, unedited, where you can make a statement that, 'They have no idea.'"

David: "Well, it's precisely why the Church--"

Father John: "I'd say that there would be a couple of thousand teachers who'd probably lynch you, David..."

David: "Yeah, it's precisely why the Church is subject to passing fashions."

Father John: "Alright, the teachers have no idea - what was the other comment you'd like to make?"

David: *[laughs]* "Well, take, for example, your comment before about how you don't think you're stupid because you no longer believe in Adam and Eve and all that sort of stuff. Well, take the resurrection of Jesus - the physical resurrection of Jesus - if you're going to believe in something like that, then it becomes open slather from here on in. So you can believe in anything you want, where--"

Father John: "Thank you, David. Thank you for allowing me to believe what I want."

David: "Yeah, yeah. Well--"

Father John: "Alright, you've now got about twenty seconds, mate, to make your next comment, because we've got to go the news, that's all."

David: "Well, my next comment would take longer than twenty seconds."

Father John: "Oh, would it?"

David: "Yes."

Father John: "Okay. Well, we're going to leave it there, then."

David: "Alright, then."

Father John: "Alright."

David: "Bye-bye."

Father John: "Bye-bye, David. That's a shame. I thought we might of got twenty seconds of more wisdom in there. Right, we've got to break for the news, but if you'd like to share your thoughts, 131332, after the news, you'd be very welcome here on 4BC."¹⁰⁰

CALL SEVENTEEN - Kevin Solway

- Teaching Christianity II -

14th May 1995

Kevin happened to be at my place during that last call and, after witnessing the aforementioned debacle, decided to make a call himself. McEwin was obviously more receptive to Kevin, not having heard from him for some time, but as the following conversation reveals it wasn't too long before the sage was merrily raising the good Father's ire.

- *D.Q*

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

Father John: "It's eighteen minutes after eleven o'clock. You're listening to the sounds of the city on 4BC, and hello, Kevin."

Kevin: "Good evening."

Father John: "How are you, Kevin? Kevin: I'd like to make two points about Catholic education."

Father John: "Good."

Kevin: "The first one is about the qualifications of the teachers who are teaching Christianity, and the second one is about the morality of teaching Christianity to children, especially young children. Now, the first point, is that I don't believe that the teachers are qualified, and so I suppose I'd agree with what David was saying before the news, and this is supported by the fact that, for all this time, teachers have been teaching that Adam and Eve were real, physical people whom God created, and that God created the world, however long ago that might have been. Well, we know that these were just blatant lies."

Father John: "But, Kevin, are you married?"

Kevin: "No."

Father John: "Right, well, did your mother ever tell you that when your tooth fell out, you put it under the pillow and the Fairy God-mother came along?"

Kevin: "Yes, this was a lie, wasn't it?"

Father John: "Well, would you describe that your mother has offered you a blatant lie?"

Kevin: "Yes. She told me a lie."

Father John: "Well, fair enough."

Kevin: "She told me a lie because she--"

Father John: "And you resent the blatant lie that your mother told you concerning the Fairy God-mother and your fallen tooth?"

Kevin: "Yes, I do."

Father John: "What about the one about Santa?"

Kevin: "But it's far more serious to--"

Father John: "What about the Santa one? Do you resent that?"

Kevin: "Yes, I do, now - now that I'm old enough to actually think about the consequences of that manner of bringing up children."

Father John: "Alright, well, just so the rest of us know what we are dealing with here, you're prepared to say that you resent

the fact that your mother has told you a blatant lie about the Fairy God-mother and Santa.

Kevin: Well, I don't resent--"

Father John: "Which would be two of about two thousand things."

Kevin: "I don't feel any resentment, let me make this clear. I don't feel any emotional resentment. What I see is that it's the wrong way to bring up children. It is the wrong example to give to children to live in a fantasy world. It's not right to live in a fantasy world."

Father John: "Alright, and again, not for my own sake, but for the teachers who do work very hard in terms of education - irrespective of which system they're in, state or private - I just don't think it's fair to say, carte blanche, your opening ball, which was that Catholic teachers aren't qualified. I mean, you might be quite correct in assuming that some Catholic teachers aren't qualified. And I think some of them would acknowledge that - that they need some upgrading to be able to teach these subjects, because it's not just what you learn at school. But some teachers are eminently qualified."

Kevin: "Well, I'll let people discover that for themselves. My second point, though, is the point about whether it is moral to teach Christianity to children. I regard teaching Christianity to children as a form of child abuse, which is far worse than rape, and which can ruin a child's life. It's taking advantage of children when they're not old enough to think for themselves. So, for example, telling a very young child that God exists, that a very, very powerful being called God exists--"

Father John: "What should we tell them, Kevin?"

Kevin: "We should encourage them--"

Father John: "For all the parents listening now, you're the guru in--"

Kevin: "And I will give them the advice."

Father John: "--parental education and advice. What should they be doing with their children?"

Kevin: "Parents should encourage their children to think for themselves."

Father John: "The problem with that wonderful theory is that children can't think for themselves."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kevin: "That's right. So parents should give them an environment which is conducive to thought - which is safe for the child and safe for it's development, and which is conducive for the child thinking for himself, as he physically becomes able to."

Father John: "But, you see, it's just not physical."

Kevin: "Well, it's--"

Father John: "Emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. You are a holistic being, and so is your child."

Kevin: "As the brain physically develops, then the child intellectually becomes more aware, and, if you want to use the word, spiritually becomes more aware. Many people never become spiritually aware, but, the fact is, until a child is at least eleven or

twelve, he cannot reason to any significant degree about abstract matters. So, therefore, introducing concepts of God to young children, with the expectation that the child will believe these things, is a very, very serious form of child abuse, and I think in years to come this will probably become punishable by law."

Father John: "Well, mate, I wouldn't hold your breath, but I thank you for sharing that opinion. It's one that you obviously believe in, but possibly not one many listeners would agree with. I'm sure you'd have some people who share that opinion, but not too many. We'll see what people have to say, eh?"

Kevin: "Okay."

Father John: "Good, Kevin. Bye-bye."¹⁰¹

CALL EIGHTEEN - David Quinn

- Women and Christianity -

21st May 1995

In this, the last call, McEwin makes plain his irritation with me. He obviously finds the discussion of God very tiresome and would rather eliminate it altogether so as to get on with the real business of Christianity, which is to deal out soothing cliches and mind-numbing pap to the weak and the elderly. He accuses me of being repetitive, but what he will never understand is that one has to clear away all the muck before one can build something afresh. And thanks to him and people like him, the muck is vast.

D.Q

Father John: "Yes, you're very welcome to phone in. It's fifteen minutes to eleven o'clock, and here we go. Hello, David."

David: "Hello, John."

Father John: "Here's my weekly dose, eh?"

David: "Yes, your weekly dose of spirituality. I'd like to concur with Delia, first off, and the other woman who spoke about men's problems nowadays."

Father John: "Men's problems ..."

David: "Yes, I think that the sort of stuff the feminists have been getting away with for the last few years has been disgraceful. So, yes, I'd like to concur with that, and it is nice to hear some women say that. Speaking of women, I find the subject of men and women a very important and interesting issue, especially it's relation to the spiritual path. In my view, the major proof that Christianity is a

millions miles away from the spiritual path is because women are involved in it - women are part of the congregation and they are a part of what's happening behind the scenes."

Father John: "Alright, I think we've possibly established the fact over many weeks that you're not a great fan of the Christian movement, and I think we've respected that. But it just gets boring radio, to be perfectly honest - you know, hearing the same thing. So we know David hates Christianity. Okay, fine, we can live with that. What would be interesting, David, is if you got a positive insight into another way of relating or whatever. But just to ring up and keep saying the same thing over and over ... no, mate, honestly, give it a rest."

David: "Well, it might sound boring, but I give different reasons every week. There's thousands of reasons--"

THE ATHEIST ARCHIVES

Father John: "Alright, well, take it from me, I've just about had enough of it. Can we, you know, go down another path?"

David: "No, I think it's a very important issue - a very important issue."

Father John: "Alright, David, the difference between you and I is that I'm the one here with the buttons and you're the one saying the same thing every week. So we've got a philosophical difference here, and I wonder who's going to win out."

David: "Well, Truth is the most important issue and--"

Father John: "Yeah, well, Truth is the ultimate reality - we've had that ad nauseam too."

David: "And we do this by discussing it."

Father John: "Right, but we don't talk about the same thing every week, David."

David: "I don't. I use different reasons every week."

Father John: "Well, with the greatest respect, I, and I would say a couple of thousand listeners, think that you do."

David: "Well, it's only repetitious, because I stand out. I think all your callers, and your whole show, is repetitious and I stand out. I am the one voice of dissent in the whole show."

Father John: "So you're the only valuable part of our program?"

David: "I think so, yes."

Father John: "Well, I think you're a valuable part of our program, but not the only valuable part."

David: "Alright. I'd like to finish this point that--"

Father John: "Alright, make a statement, and then we'll move on because we've got plenty of people who would like to have a say."

David: "This idea of women being involved with Christianity is very wrong, and Jesus thought so - and indeed God thought so."

Father John: "Hmm, hmm."

David: "Because if you look at the example set by Jesus - he is supposed to be the one representative of God on earth - and he was a man, first off. He wasn't a woman. So, if God had any interest in gender issues, or indeed women, He would have sent down a couple or something like that."

Father John: "I think one of the points that we continuously make is that God is spirit, and the spirit manifested himself in the world, it just so happened that he came as a man. I think you're quite right: I think he could have come as a woman. But he didn't. He picked one over the other and came as a man. And where do we look for the feminine face of God, where do we find the feminine face of God? Well, I think we find that in the face of Mary. Not to say that she is God, but she is the feminine face of God - because in a man, you don't see the tears of a little girl, the pain of a grandmother, the love of a mother. We find that in Mary. But anyway, David, good call. Thanks for making it."¹⁰²

THE THINKING MAN’S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

THE THINKING MAN'S REFERENCE OF POLITICALLY CORRECT TERMS

(On The Thinking Man's CDROM)
(Letters "A" to "L" only in this sample)¹⁰³

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. A woman.....a person of gender | 27. Books.....processed tree carcasses |
| 2. Actress.....actor | 28. Boring.....charm-free |
| 3. Affliction.....condition | 29. Boy.....oppressor-to-be |
| 4. Afro-American.....african-american | 30. Boyfriend.....unpaid sex worker |
| 5. Alien.....relative | 31. Broken home.....disfunctional family |
| 6. Alimony.....back salary | 32. Brotherhood.....siblinghood |
| 7. Alive.....temporarily metabolically abled | 33. Bum.....displaced homeowner |
| 8. Angry.....passionate | 34. Cattle ranch.....cattle concentration Camp |
| 9. Animal trainer.....interspecies communicator | 35. Certain.....reasonably sure |
| 10. Animals.....non-human beings | 36. Certainly.....probably |
| 11. Anti-abortion.....pro-life | 37. Certainty.....reasonable likelihood |
| 12. Argue.....share | 38. Chairman.....chairperson |
| 13. Argued.....shared feelings | 39. Chicano.....person of color |
| 14. Arguing.....sharing | 40. Cigarette smoking.....assault with a deadly weapon |
| 15. Bad.....different | 41. Clever.....different |
| 16. Bald.....comb-free | 42. Closed.....somewhat unopen |
| 17. Bald.....hair disadvantaged | 43. Clumsy.....uniquely coordinated |
| 18. Ballboy.....ballchild | 44. Complain.....share |
| 19. Barmaid.....bar attendant | 45. Conservative.....reactionary |
| 20. Beautiful.....different | 46. Conservative.....right wing extremist facist pig |
| 21. Belief.....tentative inclination | 47. Convict.....socially separated |
| 22. Bisexual.....sexually non preferential | 48. Corpse.....nonliving person |
| 23. Blind.....visually challenged | 49. Crazy.....emotionally different |
| 24. Blow one's nose.....deal with one's handkerchief | 50. Dead people.....disfunctional earth children |
| 25. Body odor.....nondiscretionary fragrance | 51. Dead.....metabolically different |
| 26. Book.....processed tree carcass | |

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

- | | |
|---|---|
| 52. Deaf.....aurally inconvenienced | 80. False.....seemingly not entirely correct |
| 53. Deaf.....visually oriented | 81. farmer.....exploiter of mother earth |
| 54. Deformed.....special | 82. Farming.....exploiting mother earth |
| 55. Delicatessen.....corpse farm | 83. Fat.....stout |
| 56. Devil.....God's mischevious offspring | 84. Feminism.....equitism |
| 57. Dirty.....consciousness expanding | 85. Feminist.....equitist |
| 58. Disability.....special challenge | 86. Filthy.....consciousness expanding |
| 59. Disabled.....differently abled | 87. Fireman.....firefighter |
| 60. Disease.....condition | 88. Fishing.....raping the oceans |
| 61. Dish washer.....utensil sanitizer | 89. Foul.....challenging |
| 62. Dishonest.....ethically disoriented | 90. Freak.....gift from God |
| 63. Disorganized.....non-traditionally ordered | 91. Fur.....dead animal skins |
| 64. Dog.....canine companion | 92. Gang.....youth group |
| 65. Dominant.....opressive | 93. Genius.....mentally different |
| 66. Dominate.....opress | 94. Ghetto.....pre-integrated pre-nirvana |
| 67. Dominated.....opressed | 95. Girl friday.....assistant |
| 68. Domination.....opression | 96. Girl watching.....street harassment |
| 69. Doorman.....access controller | 97. Girl.....female person |
| 70. Drooling drunk idiot.....person on floor | 98. Girlfriend.....acquaintance rape survivor |
| 71. drug addict.....chemically challenged | 99. Girlfriends.....unpaid sex workers |
| 72. Drunk.....spatially perplexed | 100. Girls.....young female persons |
| 73. Dumb.....neuronically challenged | 101. Gorgeous.....different |
| 74. Economically exploited...differently advantaged | 102. Graffiti.....people's art |
| 75. Egg ranch.....hen rapery | 103. Grammar.....ethnocentric white patriarchal restructuring of language |
| 76. Elderly.....longer living | 104. Great.....different |
| 77. European.....Mutant Albino | 105. Hairdresser.....hair stylist |
| 78. Global Minority | 106. Hamburger.....seared mutilated animal flesh |
| 79. Evil.....potentially good | 107. Hate.....dislike |
| False teeth.....alternative dentation | 108. Hates.....dislikes |
| | 109. He or she or it.....h'orsh'it |
| | 110. He.....she |

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

- | | |
|--|--|
| 111. Hearing person.....temporarily
aurally abled | 140. Insolvent.....illiquid |
| 112. Heir.....inheritron | 141. Intellect.....intuition |
| 113. Heiress.....inheritron | 142. Intelligence.....intuition |
| 114. Heroine.....hero | 143. Intelligent.....intuitive |
| 115. Heterosexual.....blatantly het-
erosexual | 144. Janitor.....environmental
hygienist |
| 116. History.....his'n'herstory | 145. Jew.....Jewish person |
| 117. Homeless.....involuntarily
undomiciled | 146. Judge.....consider |
| 118. Homosexual.....gay | 147. Junkie.....substance abuse
survivor |
| 119. Honey.....stolen nonhu-
man animal sweetener | 148. Kid.....young person |
| 120. Hopeless.....stepping stone | 149. Kids.....young people |
| 121. Hostess.....host | 150. Kinsmen.....kin |
| 122. Housewife.....domestic en-
gineer | 151. Lazy.....of different inter-
ests |
| 123. Housewife.....homemaker | 152. Learning disability.....self-paced
cognitive ability |
| 124. Humans.....human animals | 153. Leather.....dead animal
skins |
| 125. Hunter.....bambi butcher | 154. Lesbian.....gynocentric be-
ing |
| 126. Hurricane.....himmicane | 155. Lesbianism.....gynocentric
be-ing |
| 127. I.....my humble self | 156. Liar.....a person creative
with the facts |
| 128. Ignorance.....alternative
wisdom | 157. Lie.....constructive ver-
sion of the facts |
| 129. Ignorant.....differently wise | 158. Literary criticism.....lit crit |
| 130. Illiterate.....alternatively
schooled | 159. Logger.....treeslayer |
| 131. Illogical.....differently logi-
cal | 160. Lost.....temporarily
misoriented |
| 132. Immature.....childlike | 161. Lover.....spouse equiva-
lent |
| 133. Impaired.....challenged | 162. Lovers.....spouse equiva-
lents |
| 134. In fact.....seemingly | 163. Lower classes.....downtrodden |
| 135. Incompetent.....of different
interests | 164. Lumberjack.....tree butcher |
| 136. Inferior.....different | |
| 137. Inmate.....guest | |
| 138. Inmates.....guests | |
| 139. Insane people.....selectively
perceptive | |

THE THINKING MAN’S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

LIFE AND DEATH (1996)

- The Magazine of *The Society for the Elimination of All Truth* -

11th Edition

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- PART I -

Editorial

Welcome again to yet another edition of *Life and Death*, a magazine created for the sole aim of obliterating all Truth from the world. This is a magazine dedicated to those of you who desperately want to lead an ethical life, but lack the tools to go about it. It is for those of you who care deeply for the happiness and welfare of humanity, and who want to contribute to the building of a more secure world in which everyone can live their lives in peace.

Although most people know the importance of banishing thought from their minds, we at The Society for the Elimination of All Truth (SEAT) believe it is an enterprise worthy of our full-time commitment. Our philosophy rests on the premise that every human being has a moral obligation to organize their lives around the complete destruction of Truth. We believe that Truth - and by Truth, we mean the full consciousness of Reality - is extremely dangerous and *should not be tolerated by anyone under any circumstances*. The reason for this, of course, is that it threatens everything of human value.

A question often put to me is: why the fuss? Why bother going to all the trouble of organizing a group like SEAT, and publishing a magazine like *Life and Death*, when there is clearly no need for them? Surely the world has never had it so good! Are we not in the best of all possible worlds? Are we not in paradise? Have we not eliminated the threat of consciousness? Who in the world thinks about anything at all?

Well, as with all the great questions in life, the answer is: yes and no. To be sure, we have so far done a wonderful job as a species and can rightly be proud of the world we now live in. The way in which all of modern humanity stands united in opposition to Truth is a marvel to behold. I believe we can never thank our forefathers enough for their dedication and toil in establishing the framework of

brainlessness we all now enjoy. They are heroes every one of them, just as you are, dear reader, you who daily put your shoulder to the wheel and drive the good cause forward. And so in deference to all of you, and to all of our honourable ancestors, I say: Well done!

However, SEAT believes that Truth is a very real and ever-present threat to our human happiness, and we can never afford to be complacent. A wise man once said that if the good do nothing, then evil will triumph. It is simply not good enough for people to drift through life and not care about anything beyond their own little world. SEAT deplores the modern luke-warm attitude which characterizes our times.

I hate to say it, but we at SEAT are forced to spend a great deal of our precious time and resources just trying to persuade people to get more involved and play an active part in this all-important cause. This should not be! Surely there is nothing more important in the whole universe than our supreme ignorance of reality! Everything which you and I regard as decent and humane in life depends on it. We therefore have no choice but to maintain a constant vigilance over our delusions and lies, for if they should ever disappear . . . well, all I can say is that it would mean a future too dreadful to contemplate.

I have designed each edition of *Life and Death* to be used as a manual for the practice of Truth destruction. In other words, the emphasis is on *practice*, rather than on theory. It can be used in conjunction with the more traditional methods and techniques, or it can be used purely on its own. Both ways are very effective. From the feedback I get, however, most people like to use *Life and Death* as a stimulant or as a source of inspiration, to dip into whenever they feel jaded or stale.

One final thing. As this is a community-based project, we like to encourage our read-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ers to make contributions to the magazine in the form of essays and articles. Perhaps you have discovered a brilliant new technique for destroying consciousness that we haven't yet thought of. It's entirely possible, for, indeed, no-one has all the answers. I myself am still learning things. Indeed, nothing thrills me more than the discovery of a powerful new method of obliterating Truth. So please, if you feel you have something worthwhile to say, do not hesitate to write.

All contributions can be sent to:

Robert Black
PO Box 207
St Lucia Q 4067
Australia
Or e-mail

Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy *Life and Death*. And always remember ... "Truth is only a crutch for people who can't handle reality."

THE SOCIETY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL TRUTH

- General Information -

President: Professor Robert Black.

Vice-president: Imogen Styles.

Editor of *Life and Death*: Professor Robert Black.

Office Bearers: Dr Judy Farrow, Michael Kalisanko, Faith Hope.

The Society for the Elimination of All Truth is a socially concerned organization consisting of leading academics, scientists, clergy, business people, feminists and artists. All are united by the belief that the philosophic life is anti-social, anti-human and anti-life, and has no place within a modern democratic society.

Basic Principles:

1. To destroy Truth wherever it may be.
2. To actively encourage young people to go to university and fall in love.
3. To alert people of the dangers of thinking seriously.
4. To actively defend the mainstream political and socio-economic institutions of Australia which have done so much to obliterate human consciousness.
5. To uphold the concepts and values espoused by all the mainstream religions, including faith, prayer, meditation and compassion.
6. To encourage men and women to support the ideals of the feminist movement.

7. To propagate the idea that everything is uncertain.

"Never lose your ignorance; you cannot replace it."

"To find the Truth would be dreadful. The most important thing is the search." - Professor Jeremy Gratham, President of The Philosopher's Union.

"Truth is no road to fortune." - Rousseau

"To teach how to live without certainty, and yet without, being paralyzed by hesitation, is perhaps the chief thing that philosophy in our age can do for those who study it." - Bertrand Russell

"Imagination is more important than knowledge." - Albert Einstein.

"Absolute virtue is as sure to kill a man as absolute vice is, let alone the dullness of it and the pomposities of it." - Samuel Beckett

"He who is only wise leads a sad life." - Voltaire

"Those who are held wise among men, and who search for the reason of things, are those who bring the most sorrow upon themselves." - Euripides

"It is not truth that matters, but victory." - Adolf Hitler

"Humankind cannot bear very much reality." - T.S Eliot

"Consciousness is a disease." - Miguel De Unamuno

- THE GREAT DEBATE -

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

"Is Religion Losing its Grip?"

In the second edition of Life and Death, we published a transcript of a debate held in April last year between four experts on religion. The furore which this seemingly innocuous event created was astounding. We received hundreds of letters and phone calls responding to the many controversial issues raised. And even today, twelve months further on, many are still arguing heatedly over the implications of that debate. Since I know many of you missed out on a copy of Edition #2, we thought it would be fitting to reproduce the transcript in its entirety, opening up this important community debate to as many as possible.

There were three main participants in the discussion:

- **Father Gerry O'Malley** - Catholic Priest from Sydney, best known for his outspoken views on the ordination of female priests.
- **Chandhapudra** - Buddhist teacher from the United States of America, temporarily residing in Australia.
- **Ross Travers** - President of the Australian Atheist Association
- **Professor Robert Black**, president of The Society for the Elimination of All Truth, acted as moderator.

All four are considered to be leading experts in the subject of religion and its role in the wider community.

Robert: "I might open with you, Father Gerry. You have long spoken of the need for the Catholic Church to make fundamental changes if it is to survive in the twenty-first century. You say, and I quote, 'The Church is dying. Young people are leaving in droves and are not coming back. The number of people entering the priesthood is dwindling and the Church is becoming increasingly incapable of looking after its flock, even though it too is dwindling. And it is the same with nearly every branch of Christianity. In fact, it is not too much to say that, apart from some of the fringe faiths which are still experiencing some growth, Christianity is in real danger of dying out as a major religion'. Now this is a very serious statement to make. Could you please expand on it."

Father Gerry: "Thank you, Robert. Yes, it is serious. I have long recognized the need for Christians to be more accommodating of the trends and values of our modern society or else face extinction. The fundamental problem, you see, is this: Most of our parishioners are elderly and will soon die, and my concerns revolve around who will replace them. The younger generations are not coming through as they once had in the past. For some reason, young people are being turned off by Christianity and are going elsewhere for their guidance."

Robert: "That isn't necessarily a bad thing, though, is it? I mean, if the younger generation are finding other ways to put a halt to their thinking, then what's the problem?"

Father Gerry: "Of course. I can have no argument with you there, Robert. If our sons and daughters are indeed finding other means of destroying Truth, then good luck to them. Far be it for me to stand in their way. However, I'm not entirely convinced that these "other means" are as effective as the good, old-fashioned Christian life."

Robert: "Yes, but--"

Father Gerry: "Need I remind you that Christianity has always been a strong opponent of Truth and has done more than its fair share in ridding the earth of thinkers."

Robert: "Agreed. But what about the argument that Christianity has had its day and now it's time for the community to discover new ways of fostering brainlessness. I mean, there are the new age philosophies, for example, or the taking of heroin, or the liberation of women ..."

Father Gerry: "The thing is we have a tradition going back thousands of years, and it is a tradition which has been *tremendously effective* in annihilating people's minds. I honestly don't think it has an equal in the world today. If anybody questioned the Word of God, for example, we threatened them with the eternal flames of Hell, and if that didn't pull people into line, well, that was no problem - we simply burnt them at the stake."

Robert: "Yes, but those sort of practices ... effective as they may have been ... I mean, they're hardly appropriate in this day and age are they?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Father Gerry: "Of course, but the Church also made use of other strategies, you know. For instance, it did everything it could to swamp people's minds with useless concepts, crippling them with confusion and fear. It recruited brilliant young men to its theological ranks and used them to persuade the masses that their best course to adopt in life was to fall on their knees and beg for God's forgiveness. The Church poured enormous resources into the creation of beautiful cathedrals and exquisite music in order to seduce the intellectuals and the poets. Truly, no stone was left unturned in our efforts to cleanse the world of consciousness. It was a full-on, unadulterated assault on the individual and, as you can see from the modern world around us, it worked extremely well."

Robert: "For sure! So how do you stop the rot then? How does the Church deal with its decline in popularity?"

Father Gerry: "Well, this is a good question. I can only speak for myself here - everyone has their own ideas on this one and who's to say that they're wrong? But I have given the matter a lot of attention and my feeling is that in order to bring young people back into the fold, we have to create a product which appeals to them."

Robert: "I certainly can't argue with that!"

Father Gerry: "Right. So I think it is time we let go of some of the old, archaic traditions and instead embraced some of the more modern and progressive paradigms for coping with the world. For example, I definitely think priests should get rid of their dog-collars; in fact, they should get rid of their entire religious garb and stop being referred to as 'Father' - the whole bit. We should dump the whole lot and be done with it. That would definitely be a step in the right direction, I think. The whole religious paraphernalia which surrounds the priest at the moment only puts up a barrier between himself and his parishioners."

Robert: "That's a bit radical, isn't it?"

Father Gerry: "Well, young people just don't think priests are cool anymore. They think Madonna and Prince and The Screaming Tribesmen are cool, not Catholic priests."

Robert: "Perhaps they should grow their hair long and put out CDs and video-clips ..."

Father Gerry: "Exactly! You've just hit the nail on the head. That is exactly where we should be heading. We should--"

Robert: "I thought I was joking."

[Laughter]

Father Gerry: "It's not as crazy as it sounds. I mean, the Church has always utilized and taken advantage of popular music. Why should today be any different? There is nothing wrong in being fashionable, you know."

Robert: "No, no, of course not."

Father Gerry: "Also, we should encourage more women into Christianity, especially into the Catholic Church. I'm all for women becoming priests, for example. Some people argue that by ordaining women priests the Church would have its ability to appear authoritative seriously weakened; but, really, I think this is an irrelevant argument. I mean, as everyone knows, the Church has lost that particular quality long ago. You see, what people within the Church have to accept is that the glory days of yore have completely disappeared. It is time to move on and incorporate new ways of dealing with things. It need not be as bleak as you might think. I, for one, believe the future could be one of the most exciting and productive periods in the Church's entire history. With the advent of women priests, for example, feminine values will take on more prominence and this more than anything will destroy the dreaded Truth which we all hate so much."

Robert: [laughs] "I'm not sure I want to go into that one, actually. What about you, Chandhapudra? Does Buddhism face similar problems to those of Christianity?"

Chandhapudra: "Well, first off, let me just say that I can easily advise Father Gerry on how to stop Christianity's decline in popularity, and that is they should ditch the concept of God altogether."

Father Gerry: "I don't--"

Chandhapudra: "You see, the fact is, God is no longer a useful tool in paralyzing people's minds. It's as simple as that. I'm sorry to be blunt, but that's the way it is."

Robert: "Interesting. And why do you think this, Chandhapudra?"

Chandhapudra: "Well, it's obvious, surely. No one believes in Him anymore. Most people regard God as a kind of fairytale figure best used to soothe the children at bed-

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

time. I mean, honestly, how can anyone belonging to a modern, technological society of the twenty-first century possibly believe in a fantasy invented by an illiterate, agricultural society a full three thousand years ago?"

Father Gerry: "I don't know what--"

Chandhapudra: "Please let me finish; you've had your go, now it's my turn. I believe the whole question turns on this point of 'credibility'. As we all know, the most effective weapon in the fight against Truth is the half-lie. Indeed, the *nearer* a lie resembles a truth, the better it is able to do its job - that of deceiving the mind. Quite frankly, I think it is high time you Christians bite the bullet and simply accept what has long been obvious to everyone else - namely, that in the face of modern science with its billions of galaxies in endless space and its sophisticated theories of evolution, the concept of God has become ridiculous. Only children and fools could still possibly believe in it."

Robert: "But Chandhapudra, if what you say is true, then what do we replace it with? What safeguards could we implement to prevent people from injuring themselves with thought?"

Chandhapudra: "Well, naturally, I think people should turn to Buddhism. You see, I'm not advocating that Christians give up religion. In fact, I don't want anyone to give up religion at all. I simply urge them to consider Buddhism as a viable alternative. It is a religion which fulfills every function of Christianity, both societal and psychological, while at the same time being a great deal more believable for the modern mind. I guarantee you that the Buddhist teaching is a magnificent half-lie, one that will take four or five centuries at the very least to expose."

Robert: "Wow! That's certainly a big claim. Can you back it up?"

Chandhapudra: "Look closely at its virtues. Buddhist cosmology bears a strong resemblance to the cosmology of modern physics. There are already many people saying that quantum physicists and Buddhists are pointing to the same reality - marvellous stuff! Furthermore, Buddhist philosophy articulates a Universe which is continually changing and evolving: this is an outlook which happens to be very fashionable at the moment, and it also fits in well with the current scientific theories of evolution. Now, just

to place all this in some sort of context, I have been assured by some of our leading scientists that most of modern physical and biological theory is firmly entrenched and that it is *virtually inconceivable* that theories like quantum mechanics and Big Bang cosmology, for example, will be overturned in the near future."

Father Gerry: "Oh, that's certainly comforting! What a laugh. Everyone knows that these scientists are always changing their theories every couple of years or so."

Chandhapudra: "It doesn't matter. Buddhism is flexible enough to adapt. The point is we have no *need* of a God in order to carry out our responsibilities to humanity. Buddhism possesses far more brilliant means of producing mindlessness - ones which do not require insulting people by asking them to believe in a super-fantastic being in the sky. Take the practice of meditation, for example. We simply tell people that the quickest way to Nirvanic bliss is to empty the mind of all thoughts and, lo and behold, off they go with a burning zeal to become as thoughtless as possible! I tell you, the simplicity of it is breathtaking!"

Father Gerry: "Well, I don't know. I don't want to denigrate your religion, of course, but I hardly think that meditation is sufficient on its own to destroy consciousness."

Chandhapudra: "Well, it's a pretty powerful technique! There are millions who swear by it. And of course we do use other measures as well. Like any other self-respecting religion, we encourage people to immerse themselves in complex and meaningless ritual, and to chant and pray and study volumes of intricate scripture, and to lose themselves in devotional music and so on. So I wouldn't worry if I were you. We do impress upon people the need to practise all the usual, time-honoured techniques of mind destruction."

Father Gerry: "Good."

Chandhapudra: "However, the fact still remains that under some circumstances some religions are far more credible than others. I mean, it's a simple fact. Look, don't get me wrong: Christianity has done a wonderful job in the past. I'm the first to admit it. It has been incredibly effective in muzzling thought, but we have a duty to recognize the reality before us and accept that Christianity's

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

reign is over. It is time to replace it with something more appropriate for this day and age."

Father Gerry: "Like Buddhism."

Chandhapudra: "Yes."

Robert: "The two religions are very similar, though, aren't they?"

Chandhapudra: "Absolutely. This is why I say Christians should welcome Buddhism with open arms. All the essential elements of Christianity are present within it. We have our own Bibles and priests and Saviours to submit to. As well, there are lots of colour and ornamental side-shows which should appeal to those who love the theatrical side of things. There are monasteries for the stoics and plenty of charities to tickle the altruistic. I assure you a Christian can experience all the thrills of his own religion, but with the added bonus of it being intellectually respectable in our modern, scientific age. No longer will he have to cringe when announcing his religion, and that in itself has got to be a good thing!"

Ross: "Can I just say something?"

Robert: "I was actually just going to bring you in, Ross. As president of the Australian Atheist Association, what do you say to all this?"

Ross: "Well, as far as I'm concerned, the whole discussion has so far been a total waste of time. You're all avoiding the central core of the matter. There is no point in discussing the future of religion because, as far as I'm concerned, it hasn't got one. Our society simply doesn't need religion anymore. Let's face it, we are no longer hunters and gatherers or medieval peasants; we are educated, sophisticated human beings who live and work in a technologically advanced society. We no longer need superstitions to get us through the day. So I put it to you two and I put it to everyone here tonight: Isn't it about time we face *reality* rather than go on creating new deceptions for ourselves?"

Robert: "Elaborate, will you, Ross. I think I know what you mean, but there may be some in the audience who don't."

Ross: "It is simply this. If there is one thing which *is* true in this world, it is that no one will ever come to know the Truth. And I mean *no one*. It is simply impossible for it to ever happen. Our brains are just too limited. The universe is just too complex. Surely, it is obvious by now, especially in this day and

age of postmodernism, that knowledge is processual and is shaped by historical circumstances. No one can ever escape their cultural background. So why the need to propagate religious myths at all? Why not simply point out to people the obviousness of reality?"

Father Gerry: "That's easy to answer. Some people will find the position 'everything is uncertain' unsatisfactory and will want to seek a better answer."

Ross: "Well, let 'em! Who cares? Doesn't bother me. They'll only go 'round in circles."

Robert: "Tell me, Ross, are you absolutely certain that everything is uncertain?"

Ross: "No, of course not."

Robert: "Well then, what if the Truth should in fact turn out to be knowable? Shouldn't society take those few extra precautions to dissuade the stubborn few who seek it?"

Ross: "Why? What's it to me if they want to seek it?"

Robert: "Well, it may encourage others to do the same. And if we do nothing to prevent it, the world could be overrun with sages."

Chandhapudra: "I agree. I think it's better to firmly imprint in people's minds the idea that Truth, if it is going to be found at all, can *only* be found in religion. In this way, any individual who does get it into his head to go off and seek the Truth will automatically turn to religion and thus have his aspirations wrecked from the start."

Father Gerry: "A most ingenious stratagem, isn't it? I never cease to admire it. Nothing is ever said outright, you see. No one ever says plainly that religion is concerned about Truth. And yet no one ever says that it *isn't*. In fact, we barely mention the matter. We just perhaps hint at it now and again. Or we mix it up with other words like 'God' or 'love' or 'community', without ever spelling out the connections between them."

Chandhapudra: "It's sublime, isn't it?"

Father Gerry: "Oh, indeed! In fact, religion is very much like a woman. This may seem to you a strange thing for me to say, but really it is a most useful way of looking at it. In both cases, you see, the aim is to seduce. A woman puts on her light summer dress, dabs on some perfume, laughs and acts like a child - and, behold, men are spellbound! The Church is no different. It is not afraid to

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

spruce itself up in order to charm the populace. Look at our hymns and prayers, for example: see how cleverly they excite the emotions of yearning and self-pity in the listener! In everything it does, the Church seems to hint at some kind of mysterious reality or point to some kind of profound and glorious truth - yet the whole thing is a charade. It is an illusion in the same way that the purity and the divinity of a pretty girl is an illusion. And just as the man who is lucky enough to be captured by a pretty girl loses his individuality and becomes a *husband*, so too the man who is caught by the Church loses his individuality and becomes a *Christian*."

Chandhapudra: "Or a Buddhist!"

[**Father Gerry** and **Chandhapudra** laugh]

Father Gerry: "It really is sublime, as you say. What better way to attract all those stupid fools who insist on 'searching for the Truth' and 'living honestly'? How I laugh when they come over to me with their eager expressions and their trusting eyes! How I bend over in stitches when I see them falling down in submission in front of the statues of Mary and Jesus, praying for their forgiveness!"

Ross: "No, no, no. This is entirely the wrong approach. Why use the concept of Truth at all? Why? All you do is give people ideas. Why not simply teach people about the concept of 'usefulness' and let the whole notion of Truth fade away like a snowflake evaporating under the morning sun? Why encourage people to waste their energies on worthless abstractions? We have far more important work to do! It is precisely why I set up AAA in the first place. We have to press home to people that their first priority in life is to create a prosperous society in which all of humanity can live a rich and dignified existence. AAA preaches a biological-centered, humanistic philosophy based on science and technology. We can't afford to waste time battling the concept of Truth! We have diseases to cure, people to feed, wars to end, criminals to punish, drugs to eliminate, environments to protect, species to save - there's so much to do! Isn't it better to teach our kids how to deal with *these* problems? Let's forget all about Truth! Who needs it! To me, the perfect world would be one in which

nobody, and I mean *nobody*, ever spoke or thought against Truth in the slightest degree."

Robert: "Do you really think it's possible?"

Ross: "Sure, why not? But the first thing we have to do is rid the world of religion."

Father Gerry: "Aren't you forgetting something? Aren't you forgetting that we are emotional beings? Most people simply will not find fulfillment in your so-called 'humanistic' philosophy. People need hope and a reason to live. They need to feel that there is something more to life than just work and society. Religion provides them with that."

Ross: "Okay, but why bring 'Truth' into it? Why not simply worship your God without mentioning the concept at all?"

Father Gerry: "Well, people do need to believe that the God they are worshipping is in fact *real* ..."

Ross: "Look, people only need distractions. They don't need anything else. They just need to immerse themselves in the many things which go on around them each day. In fact, I sincerely believe that it's possible for us to go through a *whole lifetime* just pursuing distractions, nothing else - without ever experiencing the need to examine the question of one's existence or other such absurdities. Let's get people involved in sex and saving the environment and running a successful business and so on. Why complicate matters?"

Father Gerry: "Oh, well, religion is an excellent distraction."

Robert: "I'm afraid we're fast running out of time and we'll have to wrap up what has been a fascinating discussion. But before we do, let me just give you my view of the matter. I am of the opinion that the Truth *is* knowable. In other words, I believe that people can fully understand the Ultimate Reality. And how do I know this? Because I know the Truth. I know it and I can vouch from personal experience that it is the most evil thing in the world and as such must be thoroughly eliminated from the face of the earth. As you can see, I am strongly anti-Truth. I believe that anyone who decides to have a relationship with Truth immediately destroys everything of human value: family, love, friendship, pleasure, marriage, hobbies, contentment, satisfaction, and all the other things that are essential to a rich and fulfilling

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

life. It is far more destructive, I tell you, than drug-addiction. This is why I personally have dedicated my life to the complete destruction of it and why I have set up an organization like SEAT. It is my belief that we as a species can no longer afford to simply rely on myth and superstition to see us through. We cannot afford to rely on the unconscious element of chance. It is time for us to develop *consciously* the tools to destroy the philosophic life once and for all."

Father Gerry: "'Consciously develop the tools to destroy the philosophic life'? Heaven forbid! What is this? This is precisely why we *don't* want the Truth. We don't want to live consciously."

Chandhapudra: "Yes, I agree. Speaking purely as a Buddhist here, I think it's safe to say that we don't want to have any responsibilities. We don't want to have to work things out for ourselves. We just want to meditate."

Father Gerry: "And we just want to submit to God, who lives forever and ever. Amen."

Ross: "I hate to say it, but I concur with these two. What is the point of being ignorant, if one is going to be all conscious about it?"

Robert: "Well, the problem is that if we don't want to consciously weed out the Truth, if we are just going to rely on the traditional means of religion and academic philosophy and science to maintain our ignorance, then

we run the very real risk of Truth exploding all around us."

Ross: "Oh, come! Surely you don't believe that?"

Robert: "The risk is small, I grant you, but still it is there. The thing is, you see, the traditional methods of ridding thought are *unconscious* methods, and so in effect we are relying on *chance* to protect us."

Ross: "But that's precisely the point!"

Robert: "Yes, well, I don't feel safe relying on chance. I'd rather take matters into my own hands and be sure of destroying Truth completely. Although this may impinge on my happiness somewhat, in the sense that I have to do some thinking, I nevertheless feel more secure than if I didn't do it. After all, I have my children to consider."

Ross: "Hmm, yes, I see your point. I don't necessarily agree with it, but I do see it. My concern is, though, that by consciously trying to eliminate the Truth, you're in grave danger of becoming just like them. You know, like a sage. I just hope you're extremely careful."

Robert: "Relax. I do not advocate full consciousness, only enough to see off the Truth. That's all. And I'm afraid we'll have to finish up there. Thanks to all our guests and thanks to all of you for showing up. I hope each of you gained some benefit from the discussion and hopefully we'll be back here with another one in a couple of month's time."

Emotional Maturity beats Intellect Every Time

Recent research has shown that "emotional intelligence" is a far more reliable indicator of success than intellectual intelligence. It seems that something many have regarded as folk wisdom is now being formally corroborated by science.

It was found that intellectual intelligence did not lead to the greatest happiness with friendships or family and romantic relationships. Nor does intellectual intelligence equate with prosperity or prestige.

This line of research has shown so much promise that the research team has received a

healthy injection of government funding to continue their work with the newly devised indicators "female intelligence", "community intelligence", "body intelligence", "sexual intelligence", and the highly promising "ovular intelligence".

Leader of the research team, Dr. Catherine Peters-Constable, said "This is the greatest breakthrough in cognitive neurosociology this century, and has profound implications for education and the organization of society in general. It opens up the possibility that the brain itself may become obsolete."

- THE ENEMY IN OUR MIDST -

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Self-censorship on the Internet has so far proven extremely effective, but astute commentators have been saying for some time that the high content value of the Internet is too good to be true and have been waiting for the inevitable bad seeds among us to rear their ugly heads. Now, for the first time, we are seeing the appearance of web sites devoted entirely to thinking and the pursuit of truth. While there is as yet only one of these in the world, it is an ominous sign for the future.

The Thinking Man's Minefield is a perfect example of what can happen if thought is given free reign. The author, Kevin Solway, begins with the premise that logic is beyond proof and wrecklessly marches on from there all the way to Ultimate Truth. The first thing you will notice upon arriving at "The Mine-

field" is the decided lack of tasteful graphics and moving images, showing utter disrespect for modern scholarship. The lack of a counter on the main page gives just a hint of the immorality that is to follow. And follow it does, in abundance and without any ceremony, thought-triggering forms of aphorism, epigram, and sharp satire - the vanity we expect from any truthful enterprise. Fortunately you don't need to read this material to know its intent.

But as I say, *The Thinking Man's Minefield* is currently the only web site in the world which promotes thinking and which strives for Truth - so it is not the end of the world. We can very productively use "The Minefield" to remind us of the profound unhappiness that awaits us should we venture the path of reason and integrity in earnest.¹⁰⁴

- PART II -

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO LIFE

(125 proverbs to live by)

The Definitive Guide to Life is one of the best works I have seen in a long time. It was submitted to Life and Death anonymously on a few scraps of paper, but I wouldn't let this put you off. Truly, it is a work of rare beauty and insight, brilliantly distilling the very best wisdom from the entire three thousand years of human history.

By far the greatest thing about this particular guide is its brevity, allowing the reader quick and easy access to its treasures without having to wade through unnecessary padding. All you ever wanted to know about life is now right at your finger tips! Read and enjoy.

R.B

The Definitive Guide to Life.

1.

Everything is uncertain.

The Buddha shits, the same as anyone.

Your truths may be true for you.

All truths are opinions.

Your opinion is not the only valid one.

The opposite of every great truth is equally true.

There are two sides to every coin.

The world is too complex to comprehend.

Our brains are too limited to understand reality.

We are not meant to know the Truth.

It is my right to be ignorant.

Everything is meaningless.

Nothing matters.

2.

Look for the Truth if you must, but don't find it.

The search is what's important.

Anyone who thinks they know something is a fool.

It is better to travel than to arrive.

The wisest man is he who does not believe he is wise.

Those who speak do not know.

The older I grow, the less I know.

3.

Reason is useless.

Thinking gets you nowhere.

The great philosophers themselves used reason, and they didn't agree.

Plato was a great man.

Descartes possessed courage.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Kant had integrity.

Hume was honest.

*It is an exaggeration to say that Western
philosophy is thoroughly evil.
The great questions of life are unsolvable.*

4.

*Whatever you do, do it in moderation.
The best things carried to excess are
wrong.*

*A wise person is anyone who follows a
middle course.*

Contentment is the highest virtue.

*We will never know the reason for our ex-
istence, not until we die at least.
No one will ever know why the evil prosper
and the good suffer.
Our suffering will always be a mystery.*

5.

*All religions proclaim the one God.
If there was no God, life would be mean-
ingless.*

All religions are spiritual.

*Meditation and prayer leads to enlighten-
ment.*

*Christians are spiritual; atheists are mate-
rialists.*

*Anyone who wears robes and smiles is
spiritual.*

*The Pope and the Dalai Lama are spiritual
men.*

Mother Teresa is good, while Hitler is evil.

Doing good is good.

Keep going to church.

Submit.

Humility is the greatest of all virtues.

6.

People who judge are evil.

Do not judge others.

Stop being judgmental.

Truth brings forth hatred.

To think is to differ.

Thinking causes pain.

Thinking upsets people.

*The highest virtue is to accept our limita-
tions and tolerate other people's weaknesses.*

You must tolerate other people's views.

You must have faith in people.

*There are more good people in the world
than bad.*

7.

Man is born to believe.

We cannot live without hope.

Hope feeds the soul.

*Without hope, we would never get out of
bed*

Everything's going to be alright.

8.

Have the courage to believe in yourself.

Don't listen to other people.

*Let nobody deter you from doing what you
believe is right.*

You are important.

You only live once.

History never repeats.

9.

The Devil finds work for idle hands.

I earn a wage, therefore I am good.

Businessmen are virtuous.

A busy life is a virtuous life.

There is no substitute for hard work.

*Work harder and run faster than everyone
else.*

*One should aim to live a rich and varied
existence.*

Variety is the spice of life.

10.

Honour your parents.

Pursue a career.

Get married.

Love your wife unconditionally.

Family means everything to me.

*Having children puts everything in per-
spective.*

Children are valuable.

Always listen to little children.

11.

Motherly love is pure and selfless.

Mothers are saints.

*The feminine is the spiritual aspect of our-
selves.*

Our emotions are spiritual.

Christmas is a special time of year.

12.

Women have souls.

Women think.

Women are conscious.

*You can't judge a woman from the dress
she wears.*

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

13.

*Men and women are equal.
Women are more emotionally mature than men.
Women are more caring than men.
Women are less violent than men.
Women are less egotistical than men because they are less dominating.
It is wrong to think of women as slaves to fashion. A part of them is deeper.
Women are not victims.*

14.

*Everybody needs somebody to love.
Love one another.
Without love, there is nothing.
Love is wonderful.
Love conquers all.
The world needs more love.
A hug a day keeps the demons at bay.
The more love, the less war.*

15.

*Lighten up, for heaven's sake!
Don't take yourself seriously.
Concentrate on the positives.*

*Always look on the bright side of life.
It is better to be entertaining than wise.*

*A smile goes a long away.
Laughter is the best medicine.
If you can't find something pleasant to say about someone, then say nothing at all.
Put people at their ease.
Never make an enemy.
Dare to be naive.*

16.

*Relax.
Take it easy.
We are meant to be happy.
If it feels good, do it.
If you've got it, flaunt it.
We can do what we want, as long as we don't hurt anyone else.
Anything you do is right.
Do what works.
Don't fight it.
Anything which feels this good can't be wrong.
Go with the flow.
Everything just is.
Be happy.*

- Letters to the Editor -

Quick and to the point!

"I have a suggestion which might interest your readers on how to deal with the philosophic type. I have found that simply poking the tongue at them works absolute wonders. Yes, that simple! Whenever these creeps try to engage you in rational discussion, just poke your tongue at them and watch them flee! It might sound a little childish but I guarantee you it is remarkably effective.

"Good luck with your Society. Keep up the good work!" -Mandy Walters, Launceston.

Those Unmarried Men!

"A thousand cheers for your magazine. It is about time sensible people started speaking out in these God-forsaken times.

"As a practicing Christian who tries to follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am deeply concerned at where our society is heading. I am especially concerned at the breakdown of the marriage institution and the increasing numbers of single men out there.

"I say men, because they clearly are the ones responsible. Women are selfless by nature and are more readily inclined to marriage, whereas men think only of themselves and their ambitions. Indeed, it is only through marriage that men can exercise their altruistic impulses by being forced to provide for their wives and children. To be sure, marriage ennobles the soul and provides the framework for the godly life.

"It is common knowledge that women exert a calming influence upon men. A woman gives a man a purpose in life; she provides him with social responsibilities. Otherwise, man is a loose cannon, directionless, liable to harm both himself and others. If a man does not have responsibilities then what is to stop him from heading off in whatever direction he chooses? What is to stop him living for his own evil purposes? No one trusts a single man, nor should they.

"Marriage has been around for thousands of years and forms the foundation for almost every culture on earth. This alone should

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

prove that we are meant to marry. What is more, many religious traditions, including Christianity, bless marriage and proclaim it to be nothing less than a spiritual union between two people. What more do people want?

"This modern trend towards individuality must cease if our society is going to survive and prosper. I propose we gather all the unmarried men of Brisbane over the age of twenty-five and parade them down the city streets to allow the good and honest folk to express their disgust by spitting at them. This would certainly shake these louts out of their selfish complacency. It might make them see the light, so to speak, and spur them on to courting women seriously with a view to marriage." - Ian Moss Petty, Brisbane.*

The Dazzling Life of a True Saint

"I get sick to death of people denigrating Mother Teresa, saying that she is selfish and petty-minded. I am especially fed up with those who say that her saintliness is purely an illusion created by her possessing minimal consciousness, like that of a small child or dog, and as such is further away from God than the average criminal. I find this sort of talk utterly repulsive. It is simply not right to say such horrible things about someone who is so sweet and gentle and who has dedicated her whole life to helping others.

"It is all very well seeking a higher truth, but of what use is this knowledge to someone with an empty stomach? How can an absolute truth help a woman with five screaming children to feed? In what way can a dry and abstract philosophy console those who have lost their spouse to cancer? Is it not better to reach out to somebody and give them the gift of love? Let's face it, we are all alone; we come into the world alone and we die alone. We are like little babies, terrified of the immensity of the universe. It is only right that we should band together in comfort.

"This is where the saint comes in. For the saint does not live for himself, but for others. He helps the elderly cross the road, for example. He consoles the terminally ill and feeds the homeless. He provides a little ray of

sunshine to those suffering in a cold and unforgiving world.

"Mother Teresa is a true saint. What simplicity of lifestyle! What humility! What purity of soul! Look at how much she has forsaken in order to bring comfort to others. It is a pity there are not more of us willing to live as selflessly as her. I reckon the world would be a far, far better place if we did." - Jim Coward, Perth

Responsible Parenting II

"I was recently flicking through a back copy of *Life and Death* and came across the wonderful article, "Responsible Parenting", written by the beautiful Ms. Styles. ["Responsible Parenting", by Imogen Styles, was published in the 7th Edition of *Life and Death* - Ed J. I really must commend your magazine on the fantastic work it is doing. How refreshing it was to read something that is not only direct and to the point, but which actually *made sense*! You don't know how tired I get of all the b...s... that comes out of the mouths of these so-called modern education experts. The world desperately needs some plain talking and I'm thrilled to see someone take up the challenge.

"As I say, the article by Ms. Styles was an excellent piece of work and surely would have inspired all who read it to redouble their efforts and eradicate once and for all the Truth-seeking impulse from their children. However, I was surprised that she didn't mention the one technique which, in my opinion, far outshines all others in terms of ease of application and rate of success. I refer to the technique of *parental hypocrisy*.

"It is a technique which has been around for many centuries and, although appearing paradoxical at first sight, is extremely simple to implement. It is a two-step process which goes as follows:

1. Regularly stress to the child the importance of being truthful and honest.
2. Lead a normal adult life.

"Since neither you nor any one else in the adult world is even remotely truthful or honest, the child will naturally be forced to the conclusion that a practical joke is being played at his expense. He will think that you are just pulling his leg and that at bottom you

* Check out the article *Ten Steps to Find a Bride* - Ed.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

really want him to lead the same thoughtless and dishonest existence which you and everyone else leads. This usually nips all higher aspirations in the bud, leaving the child free to develop into a responsible and productive member of society.

"The important thing to remember is that one must orally preach the doctrine of truth and honesty *on a regular basis*. It will serve to impress upon the child that words, ideas and principles are inherently worthless, and will stop him seeking to expand his consciousness in any appreciable direction.

"I just thought I'd mention this simple technique, in case there are people out there who happen to be unaware of it. Apart from her little oversight in this area, let me just say that I regard the article by Ms. Styles as being a near perfect exposition of parental technique and philosophy, and I predict it will one day be regarded as a classic. Any parent who loves their kids should read it as soon as possible.

"Once again, let me give my sincere thanks to everyone involved in *Life and Death*, and I wish all of you every success in the future." - Peter Jamesson, Brisbane.

- OPINION -

Essays from Readers

This week we are proud to present *The Importance of Hate* by Faith Hope and *Men Should Mind Their Own Business* by Fifi Smith.

The Importance of Hate

By Faith Hope

We are all aware of the magic of love. It is our oasis of pleasure in an otherwise drab and dreary world, and it is the one thing which gives meaning to our lives. If you do not believe me, then turn on the radio: musicians are constantly strumming their guitars in its honour. Pick up a book: poets are forever describing its wondrous charms. Indeed, if there ever was a truth in this world, it would be this: people everywhere live and die for love. And in order that I may place myself on the public record, let me just say that I too love love.

How we desire its soothing touch! How we seek its soft embrace! The sheer joy of diving into its waters, so pleasing to the senses! O, how marvellous it is to fall in love! Whether it be the sensuous love between man and woman, or the unconditional devotion found within the family, or even just the rock-like bond between two friends, love is something which should be enhanced and multiplied and otherwise increased until the whole world can experience its marvellous qualities.

But how? How can I increase love in the world?

Often what we are taught by our parents and teachers is not completely right and is sometimes altogether wrong. Indeed, we usually have to go through many a bitter experience before we can lay claim to our own wisdom and work out for ourselves the best way to live. This is especially true in the case of love.

I distinctly remember my mother's advice on love. She said that if I wanted to be sure of receiving love from others I should devote my life to *giving* love. Now, in deference to my mother, who is a very loving and caring person, let me just say from the outset that this is a wonderful doctrine as well as being very practical. I have seen at first hand how such a philosophy can transform people's lives. But it is by no means the whole story. For if we confine ourselves to just this one strategy and merely give love to everyone we meet, we end up squandering many opportunities to nurture even more love and happiness into the world.

I shall never forget the moment when I first saw the connection between love and hate. What a revelation it was! I was eighteen at the time and staying at my aunt's place in Victoria. She was married to a Professor of Mathematics and had one of the most beautiful homes I had ever seen. It was like one of those gigantic English country mansions, with dozens of rooms and a huge garden out the back.

But it was my aunt's relationship with her husband which made the biggest mark upon

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

me. Simply observing them together was an education. They were a couple who, within the space of a minute, could experience the whole range of human emotion. One moment they would be arguing heatedly over some insignificant matter, like who could borrow the Lamborgini that afternoon, and be screaming things like "brainless bitch" and "stupid fathead" and other such endearing terms at each other, and then, before you knew what was happening, they would suddenly fling themselves into each other's arms and murmur feverishly about how lucky they were to have found each other all those years ago.

There was one incident in particular which impressed me deeply. My hosts were going through a rather frosty patch at the time and each was trying their hardest to ignore the other. Indeed, it was turning out to be a particularly nasty dispute and for well over a week neither party spoke to each other at all, except through me. It was a stand-off that might conceivably have gone on forever had it not been for the fact that a burglar tried to sneak in one night and ransack the place. My uncle, ever gallant, was onto him in a flash and an ugly scene developed which quickly saw both burglar and uncle in hospital nursing wounds of all shapes and colours. What really interested me, though, was the change this incident brought to the relationship between my aunt and uncle. It was nothing short of miraculous. Gone was the icy silence and in its place the tenderest show of affections you would ever hope to see!

I realized then that the connection between violence and love was far more intimate than I had previously thought. In fact, I immediately perceived that *all* the opposites - e.g. love and hate, happiness and suffering, pain and pleasure, up and down, day and night, etc - were not really opposites at all and that the supposed separation between them was illusory. This is a basic tenet of Buddhism and Taoism, of course, but I was not to know that back then. To me, it was a revelation straight from heaven! Love gives rise to hate which in turn gives rise to love, forming a never-ending cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

Therefore, it became obvious to me that if one wanted to increase love in this world, then the best thing to do would be to increase hate. If one wanted to make others happy,

then the best policy to adopt would be to beat them up. Mugging old ladies and raping little kiddies are among the highest acts one can perform.

Indeed, violence has many virtues. It creates enemies, and enemies create love. Nothing draws a nation together more closely, for example, than does the presence of a menacing neighbour. The strong bond between members of gay groups or Jewish communities is largely due to the persecution they often face. The love between two people is often most intense when forged by adversity. The lesson to be drawn from all this is that violence and hate are essential to love. (Ah, if only everyone could forget their petty hates and consciously recognize that Reality itself is the only true enemy of mankind, then all our disputes would fade out of existence and the whole human race would come together in brotherly love!)

This is not all. The key to all sainthood lies in violence and hate. Indeed, saints from all persuasions rely on the darker side of life for the forging of their blessedness. Without the presence of chaos and destruction, for example, what on earth would a Christian saint do with her life? Where would be the victims to comfort and heal? No one, not even a saint, can put the pieces back together if nothing is broken in the first place. We *need* people to run amok and smash things and rape, thus providing the essential raw materials for goodness to take place.

Accordingly, I would say that Hitler is one of the great unsung heroes of our time. He was a tremendous force for good. The amount of misery he created in the world makes him a saint of the highest proportions, and I think the Catholic Church should honour and sanctify the man, since they are the ones who so consistently advocate the need for more love in this world.

So, I urge all of you, make it a priority in your life to thump old ladies in the head, split marriages apart, abuse children, and rape women - in fact, drop nuclear bombs if you can. If you love others as much as you love yourself, then make sure they suffer excruciating pain. For it will cause their loved ones to seek you out and torture you terribly, which in turn will cause your loved ones to seek them out . . . and so it goes on, a never-ending stream of human productivity with

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

everyone enjoying the love of their friends and families while inflicting the maximum of hate upon everyone else. What paradise!

Admittedly, this advice may be somewhat superfluous, given that we already live in a world racked with war and marriage. But I ask you, why be content with what has been achieved? Why not strive to create a world literally bursting with love and happiness? I tell you, the sky is the limit! All we need to do is dare.

Men Should Mind Their Own Business

By Fifi Smith, Paddington, Qld.

Recently, whilst enjoying a cappuccino in a popular city café, I chanced to overhear a most entertaining conversation. Of course, I use the word "chanced" loosely, not to say that I would eavesdrop on other people's private conversations, but that the two men in question, sitting behind me in the corner, seemed oblivious to the fact that their voices could be heard throughout the whole café. Now, apart from the fact that they obviously have a great deal to learn about café etiquette, they also have, judging from the content of their conversation, a great deal to learn about the realities of the 90's.

They were talking about how men were somehow better qualified than women to bring up children. I found this very strange. Men bringing up children? Come off it! As we women all know, men don't even notice the existence of a child unless it is to trip over them while rushing off to work. Yet these two chaps were swanning along as if they knew all about the subject!

Let me give you a taste of what they said and you will see what I mean. "Women have no understanding of children as they tend to regard them purely as objects of pleasure." "The problem", said the other, "is that women have no understanding of human psychology. They are incapable of understanding themselves, let alone a child." "Well, they have no ideals, do they? Women have no conception of ultimate perfection, therefore their children cannot help but become drug-addicts." Ha! Who are these guys trying to kid?

Up until now, I had no great desire to go through all the bother of turning my head to look at them. Men who talk to each other

over cups of coffee in fashionable cafés about subjects which are not exclusively to do with the arts, or at least sport, are definitely not my cup of tea. I mean, they are hardly the type to show off to the girls at the next dinner party! We've all met them, haven't we? Totally unreliable.

Unfortunately, the voices of these two neanderthals were becoming louder. "Men do not value the emotions as much as women, so the presence of a man gives the child space to develop into a human being. Women only produce animals." "Yes", answered the other, "women are the more violent of the two sexes, causing their sons and daughters to become even more violent. Women shouldn't be allowed anywhere near children, at least, not until the children are old enough to fend for themselves." Well! This was the last straw. I turned and glared at them, only to find my deepest and darkest suspicions confirmed. Long hair, beards, scruffy clothes, cheap shoes ... need I say more? There they were, supremely arrogant and insensitive to the world. The sort of people who would *definitely* set a good example for our young children, I'm sure! I mean, PAH-LEASE!

Get a shave, guys, do something about your hair, extend your wardrobe to include something which is actually unstained and free of holes, and above all hop off your butts and do something useful with your lives. Get a life, is what I'm saying. Only *then* your views will be taken seriously. Perhaps what you need is a girlfriend to pull your heads out of the clouds, then you'd see that what children need most of all is loads of affection. They need hugs, not lugs. Children are the way of the future. Happy and secure children means a happy and secure future for all of us, and that's got to be a good thing.

This goes back to the centuries-old wisdom of motherhood, which men will never understand. Why do you think men go off and fight wars all the time? Men live in an Emotion-Free Zone, I tell you, totally divorced from their feelings. Obviously, they need to be more like us! They need to learn to cherish the miracle of childbirth and to revel in the unconditional love of a child.

I don't want to be seen as a male-basher - there are many men I know who are perfect darlings - but when they start getting on their high-horse ... well, I guess I just find it a real

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

turn-off. Lighten up, guys! This is the nineties, for heaven's sake! We've come a long

way since the days of cave-men. Life is meant to be enjoyed!

Special Feature

Exploring Feminism - Part III

By William Greatbatch

In this the third part of our series which examines the role of feminism in the destruction of Truth, our three intrepid heroines explore the issues of equality and the double standard. In what way, they fearlessly ask, do men perpetuate the double standard? Should men be allowed to open doors for women in this day and age? Isn't it time we ditched the idea of one standard for men and another for women? In fact, why should we limit ourselves to just two standards? Doesn't this reflect poorly on our powers of imagination? If you want to know the answers to all these questions and more, then read on!

Editor's note: *"Exploring Feminism" is a series of fictional conversations between three women who discuss the role of feminism in relation to the destruction of Truth. It is based on the premise that women are concerned about the wider implications of their feminist movement. The goals of feminism are examined with a view to maximizing humanity's supreme ignorance of reality.*

The author fully appreciates that the women portrayed in this work do not bare any resemblance at all to the women who live in the real world. He realizes that real women have no interest at all in the subject of Truth, neither in seeking it nor in destroying it. This is probably due to the fact they have too many other things to worry about, not least of which is the dreadful oppression they suffer under men. It is only to be expected.

I can assure women personally that the author has no intention of persuading them to reflect on the wider issues. To repeat, his sole aim in this work is to give voice to the implications of feminism in the destruction of consciousness. If in the process of doing it he causes pain to women, then he humbly offers his sincerest apologies. Let me just say that I know the author very well and can vouch for his sincerity in this matter. He is truly the gentlest of men and harbours no desire to hurt women in any way.

Katherine: "Now, Julie and Mary, the purpose of these discussions is to examine the ways in which feminism contributes to the destruction of Truth. Last month we examined the concept of oppression by patriarchy, so let us this month look at another goal of feminism, that of equality. How do you think the concept of equality destroys Truth?"

Mary: "I think we should establish exactly what we mean by equality. As you know, equality can mean all sorts of things."

Katherine: "Well, does equality mean that women should be the same as men? That is, should women adopt the same values as men? Should they develop the same mentality and strive to possess the same abilities as men?"

Mary: "No way."

Julie: "Definitely not."

Katherine: "Why not? Surely, if the word 'equality' is going to mean anything at all, it should mean 'being of equal value' or 'possessing identical significance' or something like that. And strictly speaking, only two identical objects can have identical value."

Julie: "Not necessarily. I can think of many different things which are of equal value to me. For example, there is my husband, the kids, our beautiful home, Fluffy - all of them are very dear to my heart, and yet no one can honestly say that these things are identical."

Katherine: "Good. You're judging things emotionally and thereby eliminating the notion of a single, objective standard. This is excellent. So when women speak of "equality", they do not actually mean becoming the equal of man in terms of ability or living up to the same ethical principles, but rather they mean something completely different."

Mary: "Yes, we want men to recognize the fact that we are all intrinsically valuable, regardless of what we choose to say or do, and that it is wrong and narrow-minded of them to expect us to conform to their masculine ideals. This is what I mean at least when I speak of equality."

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Katherine: "Hmm, to my mind, what you say is obviously correct and beyond argument. But putting on the Devil's hat for a moment, what is so wrong about the idea of men and women sharing the same values? Surely it wouldn't be all that bad?"

Mary: "It would be awful. I mean, if we adopt the same values as men, then how could we possibly experience the pleasures of being feminine? How could we hang prettily off a man's arm, for example, or revel in the silk and flow of a lovely, new dress? How could we lose ourselves in the joy of the moment and gossip happily to our friends about the latest brand of lipstick? How could we concentrate on appearing reflective and deep and poetic as if staring into the outer reaches of the infinite, in the way men find so attractive? Adopt the same concerns as men? No thank you! I mean, as every woman knows, a man's life is filled with suffering. You only have to look at him to see that he carries the whole world on his shoulders. Who'd want to be like that? This is precisely why we think men are fools in the first place! No, I prefer to run and jump and play with my children. The last thing I could possibly want is to be like a man."

Julie: "Yes, but we do want the same privileges as men."

Mary: "Oh, absolutely."

Julie: "Although we don't want to actually adopt the same values as men and experience the same masculine suffering which comes with assuming responsibility for oneself, we nevertheless want to be regarded as their equal."

Katherine: "Good. You see, here we have a flat contradiction, and I believe that encouraging people to accept flat contradictions is the most effective way of destroying consciousness. You're saying that even though women do not want to perform the same activities as men, they nevertheless want to be treated the same as men and be given the same respect as men?"

Mary: "Precisely."

Julie: "Hmm, I don't know. I think that women *do* want to perform the same activities as men, but only up to a point. In other words, we want to emulate men to the degree that it gives us pleasure; but should it turn the least bit nasty, then we, as free and liberated beings of the universe, demand the right to be

able to dive quickly back into the safety of our femininity."

Mary: "Yes, we want men to be the ones who stand up to the might of nature and risk life and limb in order to build the secure havens necessary for civilized existence. I mean, what else are they good for? Surely, men only exist for the sake of creating the structures in which women can safely nestle down and enjoy life to the full."

Julie: "Yes, the darlings are truly our slaves, but they mistakenly believe they're our masters!"

Mary: "That's what makes them so cute!"

Katherine: "This is terrific stuff, because it all smacks of a double standard. You want women to be different to men, yet at the same time you want women to be given the same respect as men!"

Mary: "Absolutely. Equal but different, that's our philosophy."

Katherine: "And an excellent philosophy it is, too!"

Julie: "This is why we propagate the idea that men and women have their own truths. Each sex has its own unique body, you see, with its own particular set of genitals, and therefore each sex must have its own truths, its own morality, its own set of values, and its own ultimate purpose in life."

Katherine: "And men swallow this rubbish?"

Julie: "Well, yes. Especially when we say it prettily."

Katherine: "Let me get this straight. You're saying that you want each sex to be judged differently, in accordance with different criteria, and this is because each sex has different genitalia?"

Mary: "We also have wombs. Men can never experience the miracle of childbirth and therefore can never be expected to adopt the same values as us."

Katherine: "I'm interested in the origin of this double standard. As we all know, men are usually the ones accused of creating the double standard. But now you're saying that women want it as well?"

Mary: "Of course. In fact, men only perpetuate the double standard because we want them to. It is in *our* interests, you see, not men's, to have the duplicity maintained."

Katherine: "How so?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Mary: "Well, I would have thought it was obvious. The double standard gives *women* all the freedom and happiness they could possibly desire, while burdening *men* with all the dreaded accountability. At bottom, we want men to be responsible for everything we do, because then we can frolic through life like a child."

Julie: "As well as giving us plenty of injustices to complain about!"

Mary: "That's right. And to have both sexes judged according to a *single* standard would destroy this utterly. So you can see why we constantly accuse men of oppressing us with a double standard: it so beautifully preserves the double standard which *we* find so liberating."

Katherine: "It is often said there are only two types of women: virgins and victims. Whoever made that one up was a genius."

Julie: "Yes, it is only when women are oppressed that they feel truly free."

Mary: "And this is why I think women like to preach that everyone is intrinsically valuable and of equal worth. It implies that consciousness and unconsciousness are of equal value and so gives permission to women to act as unconsciously as they please."

Katherine: "This is good stuff! In other words, you're saying that there is no good and bad, no right or wrong, no superior and inferior, etc."

Mary: "That's right. Everything everybody does is valuable."

Katherine: "So, in effect, what you're saying is that there aren't two standards after all. There are in fact *billions* of standards, one for each and every person on the planet."

Mary: "Yes. Or more accurately, what we really want is to do away with standards altogether."

Julie: "Except when we want to judge men, of course!"

Mary: "Of course."

Katherine: "But doesn't advocating billions of standards undermine the beloved double standard of women's?"

Mary: "No, because you're forgetting that everything we women say and do is in accordance with the double standard."

Julie: "Or not, as the case may be!"

Mary: "Yes, or not. The double standard admits of no consistency whatsoever - which is precisely why we adore it so much."

Katherine: "Explain yourself, please. I confess I'm getting a bit confused at the moment."

Mary: "Well, while it is perfectly true that everything everybody does is valuable, most of what men do is sexist and therefore *very, very wrong*."

Katherine: "Oh, I see. So really, women should qualify their preaching by saying, 'everything everyone does is valuable, except most of what men do.'"

Mary: "No, no, no. Listen closely. We say to men, 'Everything everybody does is valuable. There is no right or wrong. Good and bad are relative, blah, blah, blah.' Okay? Then we turn around and accuse them of all sorts of evil behaviour. Okay? So while men are pummelled into submission trying to fathom that one out, we can get on with our lives in peace."

Julie: "And while they're busy cowering and sniveling and gushing about our awesome powers, they won't get it into their heads to try and imprison us in this one standard of theirs."

Mary: "Which *they* inevitably devise."

Julie: "Exactly."

Katherine: "Now, I'm with you. Your goal is to completely destroy all reason and so break man's spirit completely. And in so doing, you turn him into an automaton which hovers at your beck and call."

Mary: "Absolutely. What other use could a man possibly have?"

Katherine: "Ah, all this is music to my ears. With feminism around, how can truth and integrity have a hope? Not only does feminism encourage people to accept and value contradictions and inconsistencies in their lives, but it persuades the world that the whole notion of standards is a joke. Or to express it more accurately, feminism is all about wrestling the power of judgment from men and giving it to women. The masculine desire to relate everything to a single principle is slowly being obliterated and in its place an ever shifting landscape of feminine whim is taking shape. One minute, there may be one standard; the next moment, there may be two; the next, five billion - who cares? Whatever suits the whim of a woman is all that matters."

Mary: "This goes to the root of all feminism, actually. What women really complain

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

about is *not* that they're being oppressed by men - for let's face it, we *enjoy* being dominated by men - but the masculine insistence that everything should be related to a single standard which is constant over time. I mean, honestly, what a bore!"

Katherine: "Indeed! We'll finish up now. But before we do, let me just say that feminism is among the greatest inventions ever to come out of the West. It rivals Christianity and academia with its power to obliterate consciousness; together, the three of them form the great super-highway to thought oblivion. But let us also not forget the role women themselves have played throughout the whole of history in safeguarding the human mind from the horrors of Truth. Indeed, without women the world would have been filled with Buddhas long ago. So let us all thank God or evolution, whichever you

believe, for the foresight He/it had in creating women. Hurray!"

Julie: "Hurray!"

Mary: "Hurray!"

Julie: "You know, it's funny. All men have to do is simply ignore our feminine beauty for one moment and concentrate their attention upon our *actions* - if they did this, they would see through us immediately. But the fools are so befuddled by our feminine charms that they either never wake up to our pretensions or else they just don't care about their lives at all."

Next month, our fearsome three-some turn their attention upon the evils of stereotyping. They will examine how the stereotype is absolutely essential for a woman's existence and how accusing men of perpetuating stereotypes is yet another cunning ruse to foster feminine happiness.¹⁰⁵

- PART III -

HOW TO BE A GURU

1. The first step to being a guru is to obtain authorization from someone who is already a guru. If you do not attend to this formality you may well be ignored. A signed certificate is the usual way to obtain worship and avoid potential disputes as to your authority. The well established "Guru Yoga", in which a student requires a personal Guru in order to progress along the spiritual path is regarded by many as the best system for eliminating all Truth. Any spiritual organization with a history of Truth destruction can be highly recommended, such as The Catholic Church or Tibetan Buddhism, but all religions, large or small, offer a high quality product.
2. Mystery is the most important thing. Don't encourage your students to find answers, and certainly don't feed them too many.
3. You should teach that there are many paths to enlightenment, and that the path of *love* is the best one. The only other path, the path of thinking, is infinitely more difficult, as well as being insensitive, egotistical, and fallible.
4. Sex is also a popular path to enlightenment, but the guru must be involved to ensure the practise has spiritual significance.
5. You should make it very clear to your students that spiritual practice is especially suitable for women. This will make you very popular with women.

Ask Sally

Dear Sally, I am worried about my fourteen year old son. He is adamant that he wants to be a philosopher when he grows up. When he first got this notion into his head a couple of years ago I assumed it was just a one those silly things adolescents have to go

through. But it has become an obsession with him. He seems to think he is "Spock" from Star Trek, or something. Is my son what is called "a megalomaniac". Is it my fault? Most boys his age want to become models, masseurs, musicians, or dress designers - is there

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

anything I can do to set him on the right path? - A Concerned Mother

Dear Concerned Mother, *it is certainly not your fault. What you are observing is a simple biological phenomenon. A hormone called testosterone begins to course through a boy's veins in higher concentrations at this age, and this deludes the boy into thinking he is either different or better than other people. In older men the testosterone levels fall off and they become much more sensible, mature, and humane. Patience, then, is one solution. Other things you can do include spending more time with him yourself - establish a one-to-one relationship with him. Encourage him to share his feelings, and get him more involved with other people his own age. One thing you must ensure is that your son doesn't spend too much time by himself where he can get wrapped-up in his own thoughts. Solitary thinking can be so unpleasant, and very often destructive. It is every mother's duty to protect her own from themselves. Does he have a girlfriend?*

Dear Sally, My little girl has three crooked teeth. Fortunately they're off to the side of her

mouth and you can only get a glimpse of them when she gives a particularly broad smile. I've told her to control herself but she says that she's fourteen now and she can smile however she likes. As a last resort I've forced her into braces. Now she never smiles at all and she never even leaves the house. In fact, for the last six months she only comes out of her room for meals and when she has to go to school. She is too young to know what is best for her, but is there any way I can cheer her up? She is becoming impossible to live with. - Ms. E. Phillips

Dear Ms. E. Phillips, *You tell your daughter to write me a letter and I'll have a private chat with her. I had to wear braces myself when I was a child. I didn't want to wear them at first but now I know it was all for the best. Just look at me now! Mothers and daughters have a very special relationship and I'm sure that such a small thing will not come between you. In another six months, when the braces come off, I bet she won't even remember wearing them. And send me a photo of that smile!*

- The Sublime Mystery of Love -

A Personal View by Timothy Hatfield, MP., House of Representatives.

For what reason are we here on earth other than to love? Can anyone honestly tell me? I can think of none, and neither can my wife. To love and care for another is surely the most natural thing a person can do, as well as the most divine. It gives humanity the chance to act selflessly, as well as enabling us to transcend the everyday reality of our lives. Love liberates us from the prison of our own selfhood and brings us in touch with the spiritual.

Imagine a world without love. Could a greater hell be conceived? What reason could there be to live in such a world? Who would we share our joys and sorrows with? Who would be there to console us during the lean times and nurse us should we fall ill? With whom would we dine, or celebrate Christmas, or go to the cinema with? With whom would we snuggle up in the chill of the evening after a hard day's work? Without doubt, human life would be totally empty without love.

I honestly do not know how a person could *choose* to be single. Perhaps he doesn't know the joys of sharing one's existence with someone else. How the little things in life must torture him.

Furthermore, I firmly believe that the act of making love is sacred. Some people even go so far as to say that the orgasm is the nearest we can come to God, but I don't know. What about the period afterwards? When man and woman lay entwined and exhausted after a bout of lovemaking, it is surely the most beautiful moment in life.

Finally, there is marriage, a lifetime littered with spiritual acts. Marriage is an oasis of security, a refuge from the harsh realities of life, a fortress against the outside world and against those who would do us ill. As humans beings, we need to work as a team to overcome the pitfalls and journey through life unscathed.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

"Follow the truth wherever it may lead." - John E. Silkin M.P, House of Commons.

"Truth is the only safe ground to stand upon." - Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible*.

"It is love, not reason, which is stronger than death." - Thomas Mann.

"All, everything that I understand, I understand only because of love." - Leo Tolstoy.

"What is life without the radiance of love?" - J.C.F. von Schiller.

"One word frees us of all the weight and pain of life. That word is love." - Sophocles.

"Love conquers all: and let us too surrender to love." - Virgil.

"More helpful than all wisdom is one draught of simple pity that will not forsake us." - George Eliot.

"Falling in love is one of the activities forbidden that tiresome person, the consistently reasonable man." - Sir Arthur Eddington.

"It is impossible to love and be wise." - Francis Bacon.

"Intellectual passion drives out sensuality." - Leonardo da Vinci.

"When a man begins to reason, he ceases to feel." - French Proverb.

"Just be conscious of satisfying your emotional needs and no more." - Jeremy Gratham.

"Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty." - Mother Teresa.

"Be good and you will be lonesome." - Mark Twain.

- GUIDELINES FOR THE RESPONSIBLE WOMAN -

By Professor Robert Black

As we all know, women play an enormous role in the destruction of consciousness. Millions of years of evolution have shaped the female for precisely this purpose. Although we may have evolved the faculty of thought, it has through the existence of women been emasculated and restricted purely to the service of our animal needs.

How has this marvel happened? By what means does she do this? Nothing esoteric, I assure you. The answer simply lies in woman's attractiveness to man. The reason why women do everything they can to enhance their desirability is so that they can grab and hold the attention of man. If it were not for her, man's gaze would look elsewhere, possibly even towards the unspeakable horror which is Truth.

Observe the sheer beauty of the sexual relationship. Woman requires just enough consciousness in a man to attend to her needs and no more. He must be awake enough to caress her and pay her bills, but not so much that he gets it into his head to go off and "become perfect" or some other equally absurd thing. Man must be kept within a narrow band of consciousness and the whole of female sexuality is geared towards this.

Potentially, men are capable of almost anything, and left to themselves will begin to seek greatness in all directions. But tied to a

woman, they become tame and docile. Thus the task of any healthy society is to educate men into thinking that women are the most precious beings in the universe and that looking after them is their primary duty in life. Women refer to such men as "good men".

It is a system which has worked wonderfully well for thousands of years, leading to today's fantastically ignorant society. But unfortunately, it is also a system which is under threat. Modern feminism is upon us, bringing many profound changes to our society - all of which are very welcome, of course - but it has one consequence which I cannot abide by: namely that feminism is weakening woman's psychological grip over man.

Before going any further, let me just say that I fully support the basic goals of feminism. Speaking purely as a male, I am deeply ashamed about the way my sex has treated women over the centuries and it is only right that our society is now acting to provide redress in this area. As my wife well knows, I harbour no ill-will to any woman who seeks to overcome her oppression. Nevertheless, I am concerned that in all this recent rush to liberate the female of our species, our more vital interests are being forgotten.

It is important that women, while they continue to explore their new found freedoms, do

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

not lose sight of their primary responsibility to humanity, which is to be physically and emotionally attractive to man and therefore destructive of masculine consciousness.

Accordingly, I present a series of guidelines which attempts to give the responsible woman an ethical basis for her choices in life. They are not necessarily commandments which should be adhered to above all else; think of them, rather, as tools with which to construct a responsible yet fulfilling life for you and your loved ones.

Don't be put off by the serious nature of all this. Your duty is simply to marry one man and nothing else. That is all humanity asks of

you. The rest of your life is yours to live as you please. No one is asking you to restrict your enjoyment of life.

Therefore, you needn't despair if you fail to live up to these guidelines. Just try to do the best you can: that is all that can be expected of you. I do ask you to keep in mind, however, that the more deviant the man is - that is, the more conscious he is - the better you will serve humanity by marrying him. In other words, strive to ensnare the thoughtful soul, rather than simply running off with the nearest herd-man.

Best wishes for a long and happy life!

Guidelines for the Responsible Woman

1) Always dress sexually. I believe this should be the number one priority for women, for it is sexuality which captures the mind of man. More than anything else, a sexy woman persuades a man that being irrational is a desirable mode of existence.

By "dressing sexually", I do not necessarily mean mini-skirts and see-through blouses. Indeed, I would encourage women not to overplay her hand in this regard as it tends to repulse the Truth-seeking man. Only someone with his mind totally destroyed could possibly be attracted to such crudeness and, obviously, it would be useless attracting such a man in the first place.

No, subtlety is the key here. Instead of sexuality, think *femininity*. Just a touch of make-up or a pair of earrings is enough to convince everyone that you have no desire to be treated rationally. Indeed, the whole gamut of frilly dresses, silky hair, artificially-reddened lips and glittering jewelry announces your intentions loud and clear. The woman wearing them says to the world, "I am a freak and a clown. Please don't expect anything more of me." Men will oblige by taking you out to dinner.

I firmly believe that the well-groomed woman is the most ethical of all God's creatures, for she has dedicated her life to the seduction of man - or in plainer words, to the destruction of reason. I reckon the poets and musicians should do nothing else but sing her praises, for she is like an angel watching over the welfare of humanity.

2) Strive to develop a charming personality. It is very important to develop a personality which is irresistible to men. The golden rule is this: it doesn't matter what you do, as long as you do it prettily. Prettiness is the most powerful force in the Universe. The pretty woman slays thousands of men with just one glance. Even the Truth-seeker stops in his tracks when catching sight of a pretty woman.

I am not necessarily referring to physical attractiveness here, although it does help to be beautiful. Rather, the real trick to being pretty lies in developing a child-like persona. A woman should strive to be bubbly, cute, innocent, spontaneous, joyful, and, above all, harmless. In so doing, she can deceive men into thinking that she is pure and virtuous and generally closer to God. This is definitely something to keep in mind, especially when trying to attract the eye of the Truth-seeker. Of course, this may appear to be a devious and unethical way of doing things, but I wouldn't be concerned. The end justifies the means. The sooner men are married off the better, as I am sure you all agree.

3) Be a chameleon. This follows on from number two. A man tends to find a particular woman attractive if she appears to hold the same values as himself. He sees in her a part of himself, more often the nobler part, and if she happens to be pretty, well, there is little to stop him falling completely in love.

The best way to foster this attractiveness is to discard whatever values you currently happen to be entertaining and simply mould

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

yourself around the men that you meet and fancy. Learn to become like a mirror and reflect back what the man values. In this way, he will recognize a soul-mate and be yours forever.

I should warn you that this may not always work in the case of a Truth-seeker. He is often awake to this ruse, so it is best to bolster it with a bit of simulation. Take an active interest in philosophy, for example. Give him a rational critique of society. Delve into psychology with him. Praise the concept of the individual. You need not keep the pretense up for long. As soon as the man has fallen for you and has agreed to become your husband/boyfriend, you can give it all away and become your normal girlish self again. For once caught, a man rarely escapes.

4) Perfect the art of producing guilt. This also follows from number two. The real reason why it is important for woman to appear purer than man is so that he can be blamed for everything which happens. More importantly, it strengthens the belief in people's minds that women lie at the centre of all things and constitute the reason why the Universe came into being in the first place.

The key to purity is passiveness. In other words, do nothing. Just remain motionless, like a snake. Not only does this safeguard your feminine purity, but it also forces men into having to do everything (and so be blamed for everything). The skillful woman is the woman who can make a man feel guilty for simply existing.

I urge you to pay careful consideration to these words. The secret of all your feminine power lies within them. Woman, the passive judge, is the great invisible force which underpins the whole of society and keeps it from running off the rails. She is the ballast which checks any possible urge to greatness. Men do many things in this world but there is one thing they balk at: incurring the wrath of women upon themselves.

5) Never cease to stroke his ego. Always tell your man how fantastic he is. Compliment him on his enormous intelligence and his overflowing artistic genius. Let him know how physically attractive he is and that he is easily the best lover you've ever had in your whole life. Describe to him how sensitive and sweet you find him, and how he always

makes you laugh. In short, tell him what a good man he is.

With enough persistence on your part, he may start to believe it all himself and so forget the terrible hunger which once drove him to seek Reality.

6) Learn to be maternal. All men are deeply affected by their childhood attachment to their mothers and most of them carry the scars of this relationship for life. This gives women a rich seam to exploit. By taking on the role of "mother", you may establish a firm grip on the man's subconscious. Hence, the importance of washing his socks.

Always ensure that the man you love is totally under your thumb. Sure, let him have some minor freedoms. Let him go off and have a beer with his mates. Let him choose the type of motor-mower he wants. Let him tuck the kids into bed at night. But make sure that in the *all essential matters* you are in full control of his life.

Conclusion. A woman's duty to her species lies in capturing a man and turning him into a husband. The more conscious the man, the more significant her duty. Thus, to assume the appearance of a philosopher is the highest act a female can perform.

If femininity did not exist, there would be little to stand in the way of the thinking process. Sooner or later, men would discover the importance of Truth, which would be disastrous. It would mean the end of the world as we currently know it.

It is therefore important that women retain their femininity while pursuing the freedoms they so richly deserve. Ideally, a woman should devote her energies towards establishing total dominance over men. As the evidence of history suggests, this should not be a difficult task. She need only be womanly on the inside while aping manliness on the outside.

So by all means, run a business, become a politician, win the Olympics, do great science, become a feminist and whatever else you feel is necessary - but in so doing always make sure that your innermost centre remains soft and feminine and pleasing to men.

- Advice for Clever Children -

"Do one thing each day which you would rather not do - but feel that you ought to do. This will help your character

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

*grow, and will stand you in good stead
for when you grow up and find that you
have to do many things in adult life which*

*you would prefer not to do.” - George
Green, Businessman and Father of three.*

- FASHIONOLOGY FOR EVERYONE -

By Dr Abraham Gossit, PhD

Dr Gossit has had a long and distinguished career as a psychologist, both in counselling and in research. He has written many books on the subject of fashionology and is recognized the world over as the leading expert in the field. He has just released his latest book, "Fashion for Unfortunates", which extends his pioneering work in fashionology and looks at the implications of deviance upon the psychological health of both societies and individuals. In this article, he reveals some of the mysteries of his field and explains to us how modern science is now invading the esoteric world of the fashion house.

You may well ask why a psychologist is writing about fashion. Admittedly, I know little about fashion. I am totally ignorant about the latest designer wear, for example, or whether skirts are currently cut above or below the knee, or even whether my neatly trimmed beard is regarded as "hip" or merely passé. My very own daughters take me for a caveman, so I suppose that's proof enough of my squareness. So why, then, am I writing about fashion?

Well, I may not know anything of fashion, but I know plenty about psychology. More particularly, I know what an enormous role fashion plays in our lives and I know what a powerful force it can be for our society as a whole. For thirty years, I have been studying closely the dynamics of this all-pervasive phenomenon. I have observed and recorded in great detail the gradual breakdown of the mind and the terrible suffering involved when people deviate too much from the norm and enter the unfashionable.

One should never underestimate the importance of fashion. It is easy for us to scoff and dismiss fashion as being little more than a vulgar pursuit for the rich and effeminate. Yet to do so would be unwise. For, in truth, fashion goes much deeper than the mere search for the latest look. Indeed, I believe that fashion cuts to the very core of our iden-

tity. It forms the basis of everything we know, accept and love. In fact, it is not too much to say that fashion is the very stuff of all of human behaviour.

I therefore regard it as extremely healthy for a society to encourage its members to give themselves over to fashion without reserve. The fashion may be in the way we dress, or it may be in our values, or in our knowledge - whatever the area, "following the fashion" is the noblest and most natural of all human activities.

A fashionable society is a vibrant and cohesive society. It evolves and unfolds like a resplendent flower; there is none of that artificial stiltedness which comes from conscious thought. The morbid inflexibility that arises out of an attachment to ideas and principles is entirely absent in a fashion-swept society. Fashion is the means by which a society can best prepare itself to meet the unforeseen challenges of an ever-changing world.

So what is fashion? It is simply the process of becoming the same as everyone else ... only a little better. Note the "only a little better", for it is of key importance. If everyone strove to be *exactly* the same as everyone else, then being fashionable would no longer be a pleasure. It is the microscopic slithers of unconformity in individuals which create the dynamics for a rich and fulfilling life.

Indeed, I would go so far as to say that differences between individuals are essential to give our lives significance, for difference produces conflict and conflict is the well-spring of both our hopes for the future and our entertainment for the present. It is a great truth of life that unconformity is as important to fashion as conformity.

While it is true that the differences between individuals signify the identity of each and every individual, these differences must be kept within a narrow range to be effective. If the differences are too small they will fail to distract us from the knowledge that our entire

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

lives are naught but cowardly conformity. On the other hand, if the differences become too large then we will be in grave danger of entering into true, unadulterated individuality. Thus, only a *small* difference can serve to reinforce the essential sameness of everyone, and so constitute a powerful force for good.

I have devoted a large part of my career to the study of differences in fashion and have developed a theory to quantify how much difference is allowable before it becomes dangerous. The theory has been rigorously tested and retested over many years, as one would expect with such a major breakthrough in understanding, and it has finally been accepted by the scientific community as one that will stand unchallenged through the course of time.

For the benefit of our readers, I will now give a simplified version of what I call The Formula for Differences. In plain English, The Formula for Difference reads as follows:

Anyone deviating not less than 0.25% and not more than 0.75% from the sum total of the current values of society can be considered fashionable. Technically speaking, the equation is as follows: $0.9925V < f < 0.9975V^*$

Where f = fashionable person.[†]

* Note that the formula can be applied to any society, no matter what type of culture is prevailing in it, or indeed to any subsection of that society. Also note that it is independent from the factors of age and gender.

† It should be noted that f includes the category known as the eccentric, but does not include the individual. The key determinant in deciding whether a person should be classified as either eccentric or individual is the degree of consciousness they exhibit. Interested persons are referred to my book, *Fashion for Unfortunates*, for an exhaustive explication of the theory, but for now it is enough to know that eccentricity is directly proportional to harmlessness.

In other words:

$e = hdp$
 where e = eccentricity
 h = harmlessness
 d = deviation from sum total
 of values of society
 $p = \text{a constant} = 2.35674$
 Also $h = 1/c$
 where c = consciousness

V = sum total of values currently held by society.

The information can also be displayed in table form as follows: 0% - 99.25% . . . too individualistic/99.25% - 99.75% . . . fashionable/99.75% - 100.00% . . . too conforming.

The primary value of these equations is that they allow us to measure in a precise and unbiased manner the amount of deviation from normality needed to be perfectly fashionable. True, each person is unique and this uniqueness will inevitable impact upon their Optimum Deviation Value. A person's physical attributes, for example, must be taken into account when calculating their Optimum Deviation Value. The reader is referred to my book for the full details of the advanced theory which fully accounts for the many variables found in the real world.

In conclusion, fashion is essential for the health of any human society, and the more fashion-conscious are the individuals who make up that society, the more versatile and adaptive that society is seen to be. Fashion reigns-in dangerous and deviant diversity, focussing individual potentialities into an effective unity of purpose, at the same time as maintaining sufficient drama to make life interesting.

One of my post-graduate students put it to me very clearly: *fashion destroys consciousness*. This is precisely what makes it so appealing. Whereas fashion exhilarates and distracts, consciousness, on the other hand, is cold and detached. Fashion is life; consciousness is death. Fashion sweeps you off your feet, flinging you into fun and adventure. Best of all, *it doesn't cost anything*. At least, it doesn't cost any more than you are already doing.

I believe that the sign of any healthy society is the size of its designer fashion industry. A large and beourgoning clothing sector implies a society drenched in fashion in all its parts. Most importantly, a large clothing sector implies that even the most cloistered halls of academia are infected with fashion, so that knowledge becomes increasingly determined by popularity rather than by considerations of truth. This is where fashion really starts to bite.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

It was only last week I noticed the inscription above the newly constructed grand gate to the University of New York:

GREAT IS STYLE, AND MIGHTY
ABOVE ALL THINGS¹⁰⁶

- PART IV -

MASTERPIECES OF ART

Leonardo's masterpiece *Woman with Henid* (more commonly known as *The Mona Lisa*) has probably done more to destroy truth than any other work of art in all of history. In this woman Leonardo personifies the pure essence of the henid (unconscious thought) and leaves nothing left over to distract our attention.

Painting is an expression in the veiling medium of colour and Leonardo has shown us just how effective this art form can be. The woman *knows* something, but then she knows nothing at all, least of all herself, and this is precisely her wisdom. She does not enter time, nor existence, and wonders why we, her doting admirers, are having so much difficulty.

She is not beautiful, but she is not ugly. Who is she? - this goddess of *this* world. She could be the woman who works in every

corner store, every prostitute, every sister, every mother, and every daughter: She is every woman, the mother of the species, part bird, part reptile.

And how much we can learn from Leonardo's technique! Notice the lack of sharp boundaries and perspective. Indeed, notice the entire lack of contrast and colour. And when there is a hint of colour it is only to draw us to what is human, and warm, and feeling. Such a delightful painting makes one want to nod off to sleep!

Our modern, aimless, scattered, abstract art has certainly gone far to ensure that thinking and truth will never arise, but too much of anything can cease to inspire. Variety is indeed the spice of life, and for as long as there is the threat of truth arising in our world there will always be a place for Leonardo.

One Woman Coming to Terms with Changing Times and Deciding that these Truly Are the Wonder Years.

By popular columnist, Tibby Lake.

Once I had hair that was bleached blonde and permed curly, my eyes were shadowed blue, my lips shone red and my cheeks glowed with dabs of pink. My underarms and legs were of course dutifully shaven, my eyebrows were plucked and my bikini line waxed. I starved myself with religious zeal and poured myself into contraptions designed to conceal all those areas of my body resistant to the latest diets and to enhance the rest. I darkened lashes and brows, fried myself for hours under the summer sun, spent hours in boutiques looking for the perfect outfit and yet more hours seeking the bag, hat, shoes and jewelry which matched. And then came that special night when the moon was out and romance floated languidly through the air, and having dressed beautifully for the occasion, perfumed and powdered

to perfection, I remember venturing forth in order to make my glorious entrance, only to be overwhelmed by dizziness and be forced back to my room, gasping for air, utterly consumed by anxiety and fear over the possibility that I had missed something, some tiny but infinitely important detail and that, horrors upon horrors, I would very thoroughly be found out.

Don't be alarmed, I have changed since then. No longer am I the naive, little thing of my youth. The madness of those years has long since disappeared. It was one morning in particular, in the middle of an early morning exercise routine, when the transformation happened. I remember suddenly stopping in front of the mirror and asking my reflection: "Just what on earth are you doing, Tibby? Who are you trying to impress? Who are you

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

trying to fool? Why all this pretence? Why all this endless pursuit of a beauty which is nothing but a sham?" As you can imagine I became very, very angry at the realization that I had been duped all these years.

"What a stupid girl!", you may be thinking.

Oh, it is easy to see now, but back then I never realized that all those years spent on making myself beautiful - applying make-up on my face, bleaching my hair, shaving and plucking my body, searching through the many thousands of clothes racks stocking clothes designed only to fit Auschwitz survivors - were wasted. I never did see that it all had nothing to do with the *real* me.

But now I have seen the light. Yes, my dears, I have had what you might call a religious experience, and I am now happy to live according to what I truly am. No longer do I have to dress to please others, but only for myself. For the first time in my life, I am living selfishly. As my dear friend, Marilyn, told me the other day, it is my right as a woman to be free to express myself sexually and revel in the glory of my own feminine existence. No longer will I be merely a chatel for men.

I now wear my thick red hair in controlled dishevelment; my large eyes are content and sleepy, my lips are small and flushed pink, and my breasts lie gently reposed above hips and thighs and belly, all Rubenistic and delightful, all of it possessing a strength and beauty that no amount of artifice could ever create.

What is so wrong with being natural? Is it such a crime to be who you are? I can just hear my mother saying, "Well, Tibby, if you want to attract a decent man willing to love and cherish you, then you must take care to look your best." Thanks, Mum. I know you mean well, but I'm afraid you belong to a

different era. Things have changed since then. We have more options these days, and one of them is to stop living the lie you were forced to live. Perhaps men in your day were repulsed by hairy armpits and faces without make-up, but such is no longer the case. We live in an age of diversity and freedom!

Oh, how I thank God I do not live in those dark, dark times of yore, when women were little more than the slaves and playthings of men. Can you honestly imagine it? Can you imagine the time when women were regarded as frivolous beings without a brain in their heads? I can't. Especially considering that nowadays wherever one looks women are at the forefront of every human endeavour: science, philosophy, corporate activity, the arts - the list is endless. She may be running a multi-national company or a home with six kids, but whatever the case she is out there giving her utmost to make it a success. Feminism has indeed created a vast array of pavers, enough for each and every woman to pave a way for herself. At no other time in history has the ordinary woman been able to take control of her life in such an all-encompassing way. Today I can choose to shave my armpits or my head - *it's up to me*.

This morning I felt happy, because I looked into the mirror and observed the real me. Gone is the bleached hair and the garish make-up. In their place is the flowing red hair with its chestnut rinse and the natural cosmetics so effective at enhancing my true self (and none of them have been tested on animals as well!). My wardrobe has a casual appearance with lots of free-flowing skirts and colourful blouses. Together with a pack on my back and sandals on my feet I travel the highways and byways of life blessed in the knowledge that at last I am free to be the woman I am meant to be - and I'm loving it!

- TEN TIPS ON FINDING A BRIDE -

We asked Dr Katherine Jenkins, world-renowned expert on male/female psychology, to devise a list of the best methods for seducing women. Here is what she came up with!

1) Establish a career for yourself. This should be your highest priority. A woman likes to see a flash porsche to go with your

smile. It shows her you are genuine. It reveals that you are prepared to sacrifice your entire life for the sake of a woman's well-being.

2) Learn to be unconscious, like a boy. Women hate consciousness in a man: it immediately implies he is against her. A man who continually removes himself by way of reflection clearly shows that he is capable of

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

independent action and is therefore not to be trusted.

3) Learn to cultivate a violent disposition. Woman love violent men and mastering them. If you can manage to be aggressive towards everything in the world except the woman you love, you can be sure she will regard you as a good man. If you can then manage to be aggressive towards her as well, she will be yours forever.

4) When approaching a woman for the first time, don't worry overly much about your "opening line". The words you use are far less important than the messages given out by your body language. A woman is not so much interested in a man's linguistic dexterity as in his ability to promise a rosy future. Always remember that the first thing a woman looks at in a man is his shoes. She thinks: Is he reliable? Will he be able to pay the bills? Will he be a good father to the kids? Or is he just a self-serving creep? All these questions are assessed and resolved within the first moment of the initial introduction, so if she accepts your offer of a drink, you could well be on the brink of a long and loving relationship.

5) Learn how to make women laugh. This more than anything could ensure your success in winning them over to your side. The trick is to appear harmless, like a clown.

6) If at first you don't succeed, try and try again. In the matter of seducing girls, persistence always pays off. Always be ready to flatter. Tell her how beautiful she is. Lie if you have to - a woman will always take it as a compliment.

7) If in doubt, buy her flowers. Flowers are magical pieces of vegetable matter capable of totally overwhelming the female mind and producing in it strong feelings of goodwill to the man who gave them to her. The man may have recently confessed to being a multiple murderer and serial rapist, but in her eyes he is the sweetest man in the world. All of you should take note of this marvel.

8) Having captured her, the next task is to keep her.

9) The perfect husband is a chameleon, capable of adapting to the ever-changing moods of his wife. He is, alternately, a provider, protector, stud, little boy, wife-beater and girlfriend - depending on what her needs are at each particular moment. Therefore, you would be well-advised to shed your own personality completely. This is but a small sacrifice and not as painful as you might think.

10) Good Luck!

K.J.

Foreign Correspondent

- ARE MEN STILL NECESSARY? -

By Mark Burrows, London

As the present century draws to a close, the time has come to consider what all of us have put off for far too long. I am not talking here about the survival of wisdom or the state of the global environment - nothing so pretentious - but something far more serious and profound, and that is: Are men necessary? Are they still required for the well-being of society or can the human race now get on perfectly well without them? Does the male sex have a future?

The answer to all these questions must be a resounding No. As far as I can see, men in future will be little more than expensive nuisances. If this sounds extreme, consider some of the more glaring weaknesses of men. They are often regarded as the stronger sex, but when you consider the issues of health,

emotional maturity, intelligence, violence, and beauty, then you will see that this is clearly a gigantic myth perpetuated by patriarchy.

Firstly, the issue of health. Boys are more often born with inherited diseases. This is primarily due to the fact they do not have the spare x-chromosome that girls have, and so boys with a faulty gene have no back-up. The effects of this deficiency can range from colour-blindness to haemophilia.

Added to this, boys tend to have more psychologically troubled childhoods. More than twice as many boys as girls are autistic - meaning they so totally fail to develop normal social abilities that they cannot function independently. They are eight times as likely as girls to be hyperactive; dyslexia and stut-

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

tering are nearly five times as common among men. And as most parents will tell you, bringing up a boy can be considerably more fraught and angst-ridden than raising a girl.

It is not much better at the other end of life. Men's lifespans are now a full seven years shorter than women's. More strikingly, male mortality is rising in relation to female mortality in every age group. One reason for this is that men are more prone to disease than women. Before the age of 65 men are more than twice as likely to die from heart disease as women; they are also more likely to suffer strokes, ulcers and liver failure. Half of all men get cancer, compared with only one-third of women.

Some say all this is primarily due to the stresses involved in creating and maintaining civilization, but this is of course a load of rubbish. The true explanation contains just one word: *testosterone*. The male steroid hormone weakens the body's resistance to infectious disease and cancer; it also seems to cause the body to age more rapidly. Eunuchs, for example, usually live much longer than other men.

Let us now consider the educational weaknesses of boys. Evidence is growing that on many counts girls are more clever than boys. For example, in last year's league table of British schools, ranked by exam results, the top five schools, and 14 of the top 20 were all-girl schools. Similar findings come from Australia and the United States. Some people say that this is due to the way the curriculum is currently set up, with its "continuous assessment" favouring the girls - but this is just nonsense. As everyone knows, girls are inherently smarter than boys when they put their minds to it.

Upon leaving school, our sons embark on another risk-fraught period of life as their testosterone levels reach a peak. When one talks of "violence", one is really talking about *the violence of young men*. About 80 per cent of murder victims are men, as are 90 per cent of murderers. Most of these are in their twenties and the cause of most murders is hot-blooded, testosterone-induced arguments over status and love. Young men also become addicted to drugs and alcohol about twice as often as women, which only leads to more violence. More than 80 per cent of drunken

drivers and those arrested for drug offenses are men. And further, men attempting suicide are four times as likely as women to succeed.

Well aware of the connection between gender and crime, some American feminists have even proposed a male poll tax to help pay for police and prisons. In opposition to this, some say that this violence is a spill-over from the stresses involved in creating and maintaining civilization, but this is of course a load of rubbish.

The changing realities of the global economic system dictate that men are fast approaching their use-by date. Should a man survive the explosion of testosterone and reach the age of 30, the odds are such that he will find himself without steady work. Jobs in agriculture, manual labour, metal-working and machine handling are declining, while work in word-processing, retailing, healthcare, and services in general - all traditionally female jobs - is on the increase. Quite simply, computers are replacing tractors. Brains are replacing brawn. With civilization entrenched and our lives highly routinized, the need for the masculine has vanished. Some say that men will always be needed to make the major breakthroughs in science and to create new technologies, such as the computer, but this is of course a load of rubbish. Now that women are more educated, they can break through the glass ceilings and claim their just rewards.

Yet men are not utterly inhuman. Suppose that our under-educated, diseased, sclerotic and unemployed sons reach middle-age some time in the 2040s. Just as they are thinking of putting their feet up on the chair and cracking a can to watch the football, it all suddenly turns sour. Unaccountably, they find themselves asking, "What is it all about? What has it all been for?" But this time the old, familiar mid-life twinge has a new and nasty twist. They are struck with existential doubt, not just about themselves, but about their gender as a whole. *Just what on earth are men for?*

No longer needed to open doors or buy flowers, men have become an embarrassment to all living creatures. With their crude words and clumsy ways, their very existence causes pain to women. Being financially independent, women no longer have to massage male egos for their beauty-money. With the advent

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

of self-defence courses, women no longer require men to protect them from physical harm, and with the proliferation of sexual aids, the male genitalia has been superseded by altogether longer, harder and sleeker tools of pleasure.

Men crash oil-tankers in ecological-sensitive areas, explode nuclear bombs, chop down rainforests, practice torture and genocide, abuse children, bash women, kill animals, rape the Third World, and commit other crimes too numerous to mention. To put no finer point on it, men are a waste of space. They are little more than emotionally constipated dwarfs who use up precious resources and destroy the environment.

However, there is still some hope for them. Women still need men for one thing: their sperm. At the moment, it is not possible for women to procreate without the use of male genetic material. But I wouldn't advise men to sigh with relief too quickly. For one thing, their sperm may be disappearing. Chemical by-products from modern industry appear to mimic the effects of female hormones and are reducing sperm counts in men. If you believe the figures, which are hotly contested by some scientists, the average number of sperm in the average man's semen is falling so steadily that it "portends the collapse of traditional means of procreation by the middle of the next century", according to one expert in the field. If that is true, then the situation is serious indeed, for as we all know, men spend most of their time thinking (if that is the right word) about "traditional means of procreation".

However, in the not too distant future we will have the technology to create sperm in

the laboratory, and the male's final reason for existence will have vanished.

So we can now ask whether Jacques Lang, France's former Minister for Culture and someone with a fine nose for fashion, is justified when he claims in the title of his recent book that "Tomorrow Belongs to Women". Recall for a moment how men let the species down. They are more susceptible to disease, dumber at school, and more troubled at home than girls are. They are more violent, die earlier and in many walks of life are becoming less and less needed at work. Biologically, males are only useful as a "genetic sieve" for the safer transmission of the genes of the reproducing female.

A world of tamed, feminized or vanished men would be a world with less meat, which would reduce pressure on rainforests. It would be a world with less crime. Pornography would largely disappear. So would rape, in all its forms. And while it is true that children would be bought up in fatherless homes, the evidence suggests that it is mainly boys who turn bad in such circumstances, and not girls.

A world without men would hold very few fears indeed. Even though civilization owes much to men it is clear that creating cultures and technologies is one thing, but preserving them is quite another. A people adapted to the one is not necessarily adapted to the other. In the grand sweep of time, the human race will soon complete its evolution from a warring collection of romantic, male-dominated tribes, to a peaceable, cool-headed sisterhood devoted to shopping and household management - those most feminine of arts known, nowadays, as economics.

- ADVICE FOR ACADEMICS -

The highest priority of the academic is the setting up of mental blocks. This is the reason the public subsidises you, the academic, in the first place. You are expected to divert all intellectual attention away from reality. How should you go about this?

1) Always teach the doctrine that Truth is unknowable and that all knowledge is processual. For example, every opinion is a never more than a "theory" which must al-

ways be falsifiable. Theories must always be built on previous theories, and the more complicated this makes things the better. Never write anything in your own words, but always include references to "experts in the field", who are others like yourself. Nothing you write or say will not have been said before by some other academic, so be sure to give sources.

2) Don't make connections between what you are studying and the real world. Make

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

sure to "reason at a distance". Making connections to the real world will make your job vastly more awkward than it already is and will eventually ruin your career. For example, be sure to avoid any logical arguments that cannot be tested by empirical means. This will ensure you do not stray anywhere near reality.

3) Make learning as dry and boring as possible. Values are something for religion, not the educational institution, so keep your work value-free. Valuing truth is a serious trap and one you should watch out for. Peer support should warn you before you stray over the line into that embarrassing area of truthfulness.

4) Become a specialist. Respect other people's fields of expertise. Always say, "It is not my field, so I can't make any comment upon that". Develop a jargon particular to your own field of work, and be careful to protect it from becoming polluted with jargon from other fields. This will go a long way towards preventing you from thinking about any subject outside your own specialty.

5) Marry and have children. In this way, when you foolishly jabber-on at work about the need to be rational, people will see that you are making a joke.

6) Complicate everything unnecessarily. When a category can be divided up, then

divide it up. Never use a small word when a big word will suffice. Write books so tortuously complicated that only a few can understand them. Scoff at those who do not know the jargon. This ensures that knowledge remains locked away in thousands of tiny isolated islands with little or no chance of communication between them. This helps to perpetuate the belief that the world really is made up of discrete entities, which is of course of fundamental importance to academia as well as to the world at large.

7) Give prizes to one another. In so doing we can all remain secure in the belief that we are doing something incredibly important. By "prizes" are included impressive sounding titles, large salaries, regular promotions, tenure, club ties, free overseas trips, free conferences, and giving honorary lectures. Make up as many other prizes as you can think of.

8) Learn to be witty at dinner-parties. This will help relieve the guilt associated with leading the narrow and petty existence that comes with a life in slavery and prostitution.

9) Be a good teacher and train the younger generation to be as dedicated a Truth-destroyer as you are. This will also make you feel a lot better.

- CHRISTIAN CORNER -

- Advice for Christians -

Or, HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FAITH

1) Ensure that your concept of God is so vague that nobody can know precisely what you are talking about.

2) Pay no attention to people who try to reason with you. Know that they are mere shysters out to deceive you.

3) If doubts arise in your mind, then make the God-concept even more vague. If possible, move God beyond the reaches of thought where He'll be safe.

4) If your beliefs seem to contradict one another, simply ignore the fact. Chant to yourself "God is infinitely mysterious" two hundred or so times.

5) Learn to fully submit to God. In this way, you can cease the irritating habit of thinking and soon attain Peace.

6) Never cease to harden your beliefs. Otherwise, reality will begin to seep into your life and you'll be in real trouble. If you are having difficulties, go to church services on a more regular basis.

7) Take time to study the sciences. By doing so, you will be better able to distort and misrepresent them.

8) Do *not* read the Gospels too closely as you may find some disturbing things. If you do find a threatening passage, ignore it. If some unease remains, go to your local preacher. His life is dedicated to your well-being.

9) Above all, do not think for yourself. If you do, your friends will leave you and you'll

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

be alone. God does not approve of anti-social ways.

10) Listen to your feelings. If they are happy, then God is happy - for God created us to be happy, did he not?

Note: Do not hesitate to use violence, whether against a threatening thought or an evil atheist. God thoroughly approves the use of violence to protect the faith.

Amen.

David Quinn.

THIRTY PROOFS OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

1) We can never really prove or disprove the existence of God. Therefore, God exists.

2) The essence of being human is the freedom to choose. If there was no God, then there could be no choice of beliefs. Therefore, God exists.

3) If there wasn't something keeping everything together, the whole universe would fall apart. Therefore, God exists.

4) God is all-powerful and can therefore do anything He likes. Such a marvellous being would never want to not exist, so therefore God most certainly does exist.

5) Life would be meaningless without God and the thought of this simply makes me unhappy. We cannot live without hope. Therefore, God must exist.

6) If there were no God, religion would have no meaning and society would tear itself apart. Therefore, God has to exist.

7) Life is a miracle. All miracles come from God. Therefore, God exists.

8) Even though I know very little about Nature, I feel certain that it could not have, by itself, produced things like consciousness, sunsets and birds. Therefore, God exists.

9) All of us have a yearning for something deeper, and God wouldn't have given us this yearning if He didn't actually exist. Therefore, logically, God cannot help but exist.

10) The light in a child's eyes has to come from somewhere and it couldn't possibly be that dull, grey mass called the brain. Therefore, the evidence points to the fact that God exists.

11) The determined efforts of a child struggling to stand and make his first steps would be futile if there was no God. Therefore, God exists.

12) The Bible says that God exists and it would never lie. Therefore, God exists.

13) Millions of people believe in God and they can't all be wrong. Therefore, God has to exist, you see.

14) There are many religions in the world and they all agree that God exists. Therefore, God exists.

15) If God didn't exist, then the saints would be wasting their lives. This is simply not fair, so God has to exist.

16) There have been many who have martyred themselves in the service of God. Look at the early Christians in Rome! It is simply inconceivable that they would have sacrificed themselves like this had God not actually existed. Therefore, it is clear that God exists.

17) I am a person and therefore *important*. Therefore, God really does exist!

18) When I kneel down and pray for God's forgiveness, I feel uplifted, as if touched by a higher power. Therefore, God exists.

19) I have just entered into a heavenly state of consciousness which was timeless and profound. Dreary old matter is not sufficient to explain this marvelously blissful experience. Therefore, I *know* that God exists.

20) Since becoming a Christian, I have given up my drinking and whoring, and have become a better person who cares for others. I am currently at peace with the world. How can you account for this other than the fact that God exists?

21) When I entered the Christian community, I felt for the first time I truly belonged. Here at last was my true family, a family I have never known. Therefore, you can have my word on it, God most certainly does exist.

22) Look, the Pope says He exists. Therefore, He exists.

23) Even the atheist falls on his knees in a crisis and prays. What better proof that God exists!

24) When I prayed to God, He cured my mother's cancer. Therefore, how can you say that God doesn't exist?

25) Love is heavenly. Love is divine. Love is out of this world. Therefore, God exists.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

26) Unfortunately, we are only human. We cannot become perfect, as Jesus urged us to do. Therefore, God exists in order to console us.

27) To believe in God enhances one's life more than not believing in Him. Therefore, God necessarily exists.

28) I don't want to know anything. I just want everything to be a great mystery, like in childhood. I just want to bury my head in God's shoulders and cry. Therefore, God exists.

29) I deserve a reward for the wretched life I lead. God wouldn't walk away from His responsibilities as Creator and not exist, would he? Therefore, God has no other obligation but to exist.

30) Although my head tells me that God is a ludicrous concept, my heart cries out for His existence. Indeed, the fact that I see God as being ludicrous is precisely a test of my faith. The more ludicrous God appears to me, the stronger is my faith in believing in Him. Therefore, after examining the matter from all angles, I can only conclude that God exists.

*Note: The whole thirty proofs can be summed up in the one overriding proof: **I exist.***

"He was a wise man who invented God." - Plato.

"Nobody can deny but religion is a comfort to the distressed, a cordial to the sick, and sometimes a restraint on the wicked; therefore, whoever would laugh or argue it out of the world, without giving some equivalent for it, ought to be treated as a common enemy." - Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762). English society figure & letter writer.

"Any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system." - Thomas Paine.

"The unexpected and the incredible belong in this world. Only then is life whole." - Carl Jung.

"I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, and detesting superstition." - Voltaire.

"Custom is the great guide to human life." - David Hume.¹⁰⁷

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHT STIMULATING BITS AND PIECES

Gold Nuggets

By Kevin Solway

*Beauty is in the blindness of the believer.
My greatest joy is bringing the immortals
back to life.*

*One word can say more than a thousand
pictures.*

*Half of all epigrams exaggerate, and this is
one of them.*

*People avoid the truth to give themselves
something to do.*

*The heart is wiser than the intellect - says
the heart.*

*The way to a man's heart is through his ig-
norance.*

*Parents would rather their son be a sales-
man than a saint.*

Others often better express myself.

Small pleasures exclude great ones.

*I don't mow lawns for the reason that I
don't shave.*

*A badly dressed person may or may not be
a bum,*

But a well dressed person is surely bad.

Goodness plus ignorance makes one Devil.

The road to Hell is paved with Bibles.

You have a fiend in Jesus.

Marriage: the end point of misogyny.

*Sport is a great leveller, but then so is
death.*

Things exist, they're just not there.

Fallacy will get you everywhere.

*Egotism is one substance with two faces -
love and hatred.*

*All pleasures cost at least the time they
take.*

Combed hair despair;

Clean clothes on the nose.

*There would be no war if there were no
history.*

Time heals nothing.

*Everyone has free will, but some have more
than others.*

*Positive thinking is the triumph of negative
forces.*

*If I worked as much as others I would do as
little as they.*

*Tell me what you believe and I'll tell you
where you're going wrong.¹⁰⁸*

Thoughts on Thinking

*The great artist and thinker are the simpli-
fiers.*

*Wise people think all they say; fools say all
they think.*

*The wise man thinks once before he speaks
twice.*

*A "New Thinker" when studied closely, is
merely someone who does not know what
other people have thought.*

*But far too numerous was the herd of such,
who think too little, and who talk too much.*

*There is no expedient to which a man will
not go to avoid the real labour of thinking.*

*Every good thought you think is contrib-
uting its share to the ultimate result of your
life.*

*Thought makes the whole dignity of man;
therefore endeavour to think well, that is the
only morality.*

*Few people think more than two or three
times a year. I have made an international
reputation for myself by thinking once or
twice a week. - George Bernard Shaw*

*Sixty minutes of thinking of any kind is
bound to lead to confusion and unhappiness.*

*Womens' intuition is the result of millions
of years of not thinking.*

*Woman feels she does not exist if man
treats her as a thinking being.*

*The wisdom of women saves them from get-
ting involved with thinking men.*

*Woman's philosophy: I wear see-through,
therefore I am.*

*Man's philosophy: I think therefore I of-
fend.*

*A man should aim to think as much as a
woman feels.*

*There are two common ways to avoid
thinking: one is to never read, and the other
is to do nothing but read.*

*Two sorts of writers possess genius: those
who think, and those who cause others to
think.*

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

*But words are things; and a small drop of ink,
Falling, like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions,
think.*

Think much, speak little, and write less.

*You can lead high school graduates to
University, but you can't make them think.*

If you think before you speak, the other fellow gets his joke in first.

Think before you think!

*The real problem is not whether machines
think but whether people do.*

*We live in a most unselfish era where hardly
anyone is egotist enough to wish to do their
own thinking.*

*As soon as you can say what you think, and
not what some other person has thought for
you, you are on the way to being a remarkable
man.*

*Cogito cogito ergo cogito sum -- "I think
that I think, therefore I think that I am."*

No one has ever had an idea in a dress suit.

*Everything has been thought of before; the
problem is to think of it again.*

So far as a man thinks, he is free.

*Think like a man of action, act like a man
of thought.*

*Anyone who has begun to think places
some portion of the world in jeopardy.*

*If you make people think they're thinking,
they'll love you. If you really make them
think, they'll hate you.*

*The human race knows enough about
thinking to prevent it.*

*The object of modern science is to make all
aspects of reality equally boring, so that no
one will be tempted to think about them.*

*If one wishes to think for a few hours of
each day, one must use the remaining hours
to rest-up in preparation.*

*Amusement is the happiness of those that
cannot think.*

*Thinker: a person who aims where your
head ought to be.*

*Thinking is often only a flash between two
long nights, but this flash is everything.*

*If you give me six lines written by the most
honest man, I will find something in them to
hang him.¹⁰⁹*

*(I include this somewhat whimsical piece
only because it is an interesting read. K.S)*

Women, by nature, are evil. It is only when we understand this simple concept that men can ever hope to understand women. Hopefully, with these guidelines, men will have a better understanding of the mysterious ways of womankind. The first thing one must remember about a woman is that she knows everything. This is without exception. To go as far as to say that a woman knows what you are thinking is not unrealistic. If, at any point of time, you are unsure of what you are thinking, one of the best ways to find out is to ask the nearest woman.

But, unfortunately, there is a drawback to asking a woman such a question. This drawback is that she, in all probability, will answer. And once a woman starts talking, it is very rare that she will ever stop. I believe this has something to do with the way that women think. Women believe that as long as they are talking, people are listening. Of course, listening to a woman talk can be very tedious at times. It is OK not to listen to her as long as you nod your head in agreement and say Uh-huh every now and then. This makes the woman think you are listening and therefore she is happy.

Happiness is a good thing in a woman. If a woman is not happy, all hell breaks loose. In order to help a woman keep a state of happiness, one should buy her gifts for various reasons. These reasons include the one-month anniversary, the one-year anniversary, Presidents Day, and any day whose date is a multiple of one. These gifts could be in the conventional form of flowers and candy, or for greater happiness, cars and real estate.

Often, when a woman says something, it is not what she means. But, other times, she says exactly what she means. It is only possible to distinguish these two cases if you are a woman. Since women already know the nature of women, this is of no use to them. For men, we can only hope to distinguish the difference, for a mistake in judgement can result in death.

Women know what men want. This is very strange, because even men sometimes don't know what they want. However, I must observe that it seems that what men want for the most part is women. This is unfortunate, for

**A Guide to Women
By a Gentleman**

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

women know this fact and know that it is possible for them to do almost anything and this fact will not change.

Women have a very delicate nature. It is virtually impossible to keep one happy all of the time. It is totally impossible to know what one is thinking or feeling. And it is also impossible for us men, knowing how evil they are, not to love them. Women. You can't live with 'em. And, you can't live with 'em.¹¹⁰

A Critique of U.G. Krishnamurti

By David Quinn

U.G. Krishnamurti is certainly an interesting man. On the surface, his teachings appear to be genuinely Zennish. He powerfully attacks much of what humanity believes and cherishes, and is extremely critical of religious teachers, whom he calls frauds. He endeavours to undermine all the imagined "certainties" of his listeners and tries to keep them continually off-balance by contradicting everything that has ever been said before, including his very own statements. In so doing, his listeners are given no handles by which to form easy conclusions and are therefore forced to do some active thinking for themselves.

All this is very admirable. But the problem I have with UG is that he doesn't go anywhere near far enough. While his *words* are sometimes pretty good, his actions and his lifestyle are a different matter altogether. They provide too much nourishment for his deluded followers and nullify all the good that may come from his words.

Undermining realities for the sake of wisdom is completely different to undermining realities just for the sheer sake of it. In other words, being truly Zennish is infinitely removed from being merely contradictory. That UG's actions undermine his verbal teaching is not something to be celebrated. It is not an expression of his wisdom, but of his *ego*. At bottom, UG is a coward, and his cowardice literally destroys everything he says. Instead of promoting wisdom, UG is promoting delusions and lies.

I define wisdom as being the absence of all delusions. A wise man, then, is one who has banished all false thinking from his mind. This is also UG's stated goal. He advocates the "natural" state which comes from elimi-

nating all false concepts, like "enlightenment", "spirituality", "God", "self", and so on. On this, I agree with him entirely.

But unfortunately, UG does not live in the "natural" state, as he often likes to claim. To my eyes, he is merely an actor, albeit a very ingenious one. He conforms to a *role*, that of the anti-guru, and as such is no different to any of the other thousands of run-of-the-mill gurus which litter this sorry planet. And just like all these other gurus, his role-playing only serves to *strengthen* the delusions of his listeners. His words might be full of fire and brimstone, but deep down everyone knows he is just a harmless puppy.

His lifestyle is far too concrete for my liking. He has literally cemented himself into the role of the anti-guru. He does this by wearing guru-like clothes, having guru-like hair, being rude to people, abusing his listeners, and treating everyone as if they were infinitely below him. Whenever he opens his mouth he seems to be addressing empty space. In other words, he directs his words into a vacuum, rather than attending closely to the questioner before him. Because he takes little account of the wisdom or character of the person who talks to him, his teachings lack *discrimination*. The person could well be a genuine human being asking a perfectly valid question, but more often than not UG just abuses him.

I certainly don't like the way UG speaks against every single wise man who has ever lived, as if he were the only person in history who has discovered the Truth! This is a very misleading and harmful habit of his. It only bolsters the personality cult which surrounds him and obscures the timeless wisdom which has been known for thousands of years.

Look at some sayings of wise people from the past:

"I truly attained nothing from complete, unexcelled enlightenment." - Buddha.

"In truth there is no unalterable Dharma which the Tathagata could have preached. Methods and techniques cannot be compared to the sudden elimination of conceptual thought, in the certain knowledge that there is nothing at all which has absolute existence, nothing on

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

which to lay hold, nothing on which to rely, nothing in which to abide, nothing subjective or objective." - Huang Po.

"True nature is no-nature." - Hakuin.

"The Kingdom of God is only for the thoroughly dead." - Meister Eckhart.

All these men are teaching the very same thing that UG is supposedly teaching. The giving up of "seeking enlightenment" is a profound truth which has been articulated many times by wise men of all cultures. So why doesn't UG acknowledge this? Because it would destroy his role as an anti-guru.

If UG actually stepped down off his high horse and acknowledged his agreement with these men, his status would immediately be lowered in his followers' eyes. No longer would he be able to gain artificial substance by contrasting himself with the whole of humanity. His contrived personality would begin to dissipate and merge into other people.

In the Tao Te Ching it says somewhere that "the sage covers his tracks". As outlined above, this is something which UG does very poorly. He is far too visible to his deluded followers for my liking. UG's charismatic acting stands in the way of whatever wisdom he happens to possess. He literally fosters the personality cult which has sprung up around him. An example is his beloved "calamity", which he often speaks about and which is supposed to be central to his wisdom. Now I ask you, what on earth does this have to with understanding the Truth? Absolutely nothing! Yet he frequently spins this yarn about how he "physically died" as if it were somehow important, and this only causes his followers to bend down and worship him all the more. Rather than worshipping the Truth, his followers worship the vanity of UG instead.

There is no escaping the fact that the quality of his followers is very low. This more than anything else is a damning judgment upon the man. The type of people who are attracted to him are of the worst kind - submissive, worshipful, and sado-masochistic. People flock to him in order to be abused and get beaten up, something they will cherish for the rest of their lives. And it is obvious that

UG himself takes great pleasure in inflicting pain upon them.

Accordingly, I find UG's attempts to repel people very insincere. The fact that he is frequently abusive, often rudely telling people to go away, is held up as a kind of proof that he is somehow different to the other gurus, that he really doesn't sell himself in order to be popular. But it doesn't wash with me. Look deeply into the man and you will see all the con tricks of a typical salesman.

UG doesn't really want to repel people. He only wants to be *seen* to be doing so. This is his image, his trademark style. It is the covert means by which he can attract a following. I mean, if he truly wanted to repel people, he could do so very easily. He could start becoming physically violent towards them, for example, or start urinating on them, or begin defecating in the living room, or start masturbating in the middle of a lecture, or whatever. If he started doing things like this, I assure you his followers would soon flee him like the plague.

More to the point, if he really wanted to drive people away and yet remain philosophical, all he has to do is start preaching about the nature of woman. I doubt very much whether his followers could really stomach an honest assessment of feminine nature. But I also doubt whether UG himself actually understands the profound difference between masculinity and femininity. I get the impression that he continually blocks this kind of knowledge from penetrating his consciousness.

So you see, UG Krishnamurti is not much of a wise man at all. He is duplicitous, dishonest, fraudulent, and vain. He boasts that he gives away everything he owns at the start of each year, including all his money. But he does this knowing full well he can rely on his followers to support him. And the reason he can rely on them is because he willingly panders to their delusions. Deep down, he regards his followers as little more than an investment for the future.

The root problem with UG, the one that underlies all the other problems outlined above, is that he has no bodhicitta. By this I mean he has no desire to become perfect. He is not willing to go all the way and eliminate his delusions completely. He holds onto a portion of his ego in order to enjoy life. J.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Krishnamurti may have only seen the sugar cube and not tasted it, as UG is fond of saying, but UG himself does not want to *become* the sugar cube. He has some awareness of God, but has no desire to develop it into a *full-blown consciousness of God*.

Out of this lack of bodhicitta arise consequences of the worst kind. All the evils of egotism - war, violence, rape, ignorance, etc - are in large part *caused* by people like UG. For they set themselves up as gurus and therefore must assume a far greater responsibility for the world than ordinary people. And if these gurus are not really genuine, as is the case with UG, then the harm that is caused by them is simply immense.

But UG seems to be utterly unaware of this kind of thing. Indeed, his frequent claims that he has no teaching, that he is not a guru, that he does not believe in the "perfect person", etc, allows him an easy escape route from all responsibilities as a teacher. He can use these discourses to deflect anything which is directed too close to the bone. It enables him to obscure the fact that he is, at bottom, just a common egotist hell-bent on enjoying life and who just so happens to have some decent verbal skills.

As soon as UG dies, whatever wisdom he possesses will also die. All that will be left will be a sorry bunch of third-rate individuals fashioning a religious cult out of his name. It will be exactly the same fate as that of Ramakrishna, the Buddha and Jesus. A low quality religion, filled with superstitions and lies, will emerge and negate everything of value. This is the true face of U.G. Krishnamurti's wisdom.¹¹¹

Gulliver's Travels & The Wisdom of the Houyhnhnms

Read the whole book *Gulliver's Travels*, by Jonathan Swift, or enjoy some of my favorite passages below.

Some of my Favorite Passages from Gulliver's Travels

After the publication of the first edition of his book Gulliver wrote to his cousin concerning his cousin's handling of the manuscript. What follows is an excerpt from this letter, which prefaced the later editions of *Gulliver's Travels*. For clarifi-

cation I should point out that Gulliver refers to human beings by the name of "Yahoos".

... I do in the next place complain of my own great want of judgement, in being prevailed upon by the entreaties and false reasonings of you and some others, very much against my own opinion, to suffer my travels to be published. Pray bring to your mind how often I desired you to consider, when you insisted on the motive of public good; that the Yahoos were a species of animals utterly incapable of amendment by precepts or examples: and so it hath proved; for instead of seeing a full stop put to all abuses and corruptions, at least in this little island, as I had reason to expect: behold, after above six months warning, I cannot learn that my book hath produced one single effect according to my intentions: I desired you would let me know by a letter, when party and faction were extinguished; judges learned and upright; pleaders honest and modest, with some tincture of common sense; and Smithfield blazing with pyramids of lawbooks; the young nobility's education entirely changed; the physicians banished; the female Yahoos abounding in virtue, honour, truth and good sense; courts and levees of great ministers thoroughly weeded and swept; wit, merit and learning rewarded; all disgracers of the press in prose and verse condemned to eat nothing but their own cotton, and quench their thirst with their own ink. These and a thousand other reformations, I firmly counted upon by your encouragement; as indeed they were plainly deducible from the precepts delivered in my book. And it must be owned that seven months were a sufficient time to correct every vice and folly to which Yahoos are subject, if their natures had been capable of the least disposition to virtue or wisdom: yet so far have you been from answering my expectation in any of your letters, that on the contrary you are loading our carrier every week with libels, and keys, and reflections, and memoirs, and second parts; wherein I see myself accused of reflecting upon great states-folk, of degrading human nature (for so they have still the confidence to style it), and of abusing the female sex. I find likewise that the writers of those bundles are not agreed among themselves; for some of them will not

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

allow me to be author of my own travels; and others make me author of books to which I am wholly a stranger.

... I have other complaints to make upon this vexatious occasion; but I forbear troubling myself or you any further. I must freely confess, that since my last return some corruptions of my Yahoo nature have revived in me by conversing with a few of your species, and particularly those of my own family, by an unavoidable necessity; else I should never have attempted so absurd a project as that of reforming the Yahoo race in this kingdom; but I have now done with all visionary schemes for ever.

... Do these miserable animals presume to think that I am so far degenerated as to defend my veracity? Yahoo as I am, it is well known through all Houyhnhnm-land, that by the instructions and example of my illustrious master I was able in the compass of two years (although I confess with the utmost difficulty) to remove that infernal habit of lying, shuffling, deceiving, and equivocating, so deeply rooted in the very souls of all my species, especially the Europeans.

After his memorable experiences on the tiny land of Liliput, and another troublesome voyage, Gulliver found himself in the giant land of Brobdingnag, and was often called upon to entertain the Maids of Honor of the Court.

That which gave me most uneasiness among these Maids of Honor, when my nurse carried me to visit them, was to see them use me without any manner of ceremony, like a creature who had no sort of consequence. For they would strip themselves to the skin, and put on their smocks in my presence, while I was placed on their toilet directly before their naked bodies, which, I am sure, to me was very far from being a tempting sight, or from giving me any other emotions than those of horror and disgust. Their skins appeared so coarse and uneven, so variously colored, when I saw them near, with a mole here and there as broad as a trencher, and hairs hanging from it thicker than packthreads, to say nothing further concerning the rest of their persons. Neither did they at all scruple, while

I was by, to discharge what they had drunk, to the quantity of at least two hogsheads, in a vessel that held above three tons. The handsomest among these Maids of Honor, a pleasant frolicsome girl of sixteen, would sometimes set me astride upon one of her nipples, with many other tricks, wherein the reader will excuse me for not being over particular. But I was so much displeased, that I entreated Glumdalclitch to contrive some excuse for not seeing that young lady any more.

Another voyage, and Gulliver had been shipwrecked (again) and was rescued by the inhabitants of a strange floating island. This turned out to be the capital and the home of the Royal Palace. The male inhabitants of this island thought only about mathematics and music. They were so engrossed in their thoughts that they couldn't even speak or listen properly without the help of "flappers" who would vigorously hit their mouths and ears when they needed to communicate.

The wives and daughters lament their confinement to the island, although I think it the most delicious spot of ground in the world; and although they live here in the greatest plenty and magnificence, and are allowed to do whatever they please, they long to see the world, and take the diversions of the metropolis, which they are not allowed to do without a particular licence from the King; and this is not easy to be obtained, because the people of quality have found by frequent experience, how hard it is to persuade their women to return from below. I was told that a great Court lady; who had several children, is married to the prime Minister, the richest subject in the kingdom, a very graceful person; extremely fond of her, and lives in the finest palace of the island, went down to Lagado, on the pretence of health, there hid herself for several months, till the King sent a warrant to search for her, and she was found in an obscure eating-house all in rags, having pawned her clothes to maintain an old deformed footman, who beat her every day, and in whose company she was taken much against her will. And although her husband received her with all possible kindness, and without the least reproach, she soon after contrived to steal down again with all her

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

jewels, to the same gallant, and hath not been heard of since.

This may perhaps pass with the reader rather for an European or English story, than for one of a country so remote. But he may please to consider, that the caprices of womankind are not limited by any climate or nation, and that they are much more uniform than can be easily imagined.

Gulliver is granted permission to visit
The Academy on the mainland.

I heard a very warm debate between two professors, about the most commodious and effectual ways and means of raising money without grieving the subject. The first affirmed the most just method would be to lay a certain tax upon vices and folly, and the sum fixed upon every man to be rated after the fairest manner by a jury of his neighbors. The second was of an opinion directly contrary, to tax those qualities of body and mind for which men chiefly value themselves, the rate to be more or less according to the degrees of excelling, the decision whereof should be left entirely to their own breast. The highest tax was upon men who are the greatest favorites of the other sex, and the assessments according to the number and natures of the favors they have received; for which they are allowed to be their own vouchers. Wit, valor, and politeness were likewise proposed to be largely taxed, and collected in the same manner, by every person's giving his own word for the quantum of what he possessed. But as to honor, justice, wisdom, and learning, they should not be taxed at all, because they are qualifications of so singular a kind, that no man will either allow them in his neighbor, or value them in himself.

The women were proposed to be taxed according to their beauty and skill in dressing, wherein they had the same privilege with the men, to be determined by their own judgment. But constancy, chastity, good sense, and good nature were not rated, because they would not bear the charge of collecting.

Gulliver visits the Island of Magicians,
and is able to call-up and speak to the
dead, and so clarify points of history.

I had the curiosity to enquire in a particular manner, by what method great numbers had procured to themselves high titles of honor, and prodigious estates; and I confined my inquiry to a very modern period; however, without grating upon present times, because I would be sure to give no offense even to foreigners (for I hope the reader need not be told that I do not in the least intend my own country in what I say upon this occasion), a great number of persons concerned were called up, and upon a very slight examination, discovered such a scene of infamy, that I cannot reflect upon it without some seriousness. Perjury, oppression, subornation, fraud, panderism, and the like infirmities, were amongst the most excusable arts they had to mention, and for these I gave, as it was reasonable, great allowance. But when some confessed they owed their greatness and wealth to sodomy or incest, others to the prostituting of their own wives and daughters; others to the betraying of their country or their prince; some to poisoning, more to the perverting of justice in order to destroy the innocent; I hope I may be pardoned if these discoveries inclined me little to abate of that profound veneration which I am naturally apt to pay to persons of high rank, who ought to be treated with the utmost respect due to their sublime dignity, by us their inferiors.

I had often read of some great services done to princes and states, and desired to see the persons by whom those services were performed. Upon inquiry I was told that their names were to be found on no record, except a few of them whom history has represented as the vilest rogues and traitors. As to the rest, I had never once heard of them. They all appeared with dejected looks, and in the meanest habit, most of them telling me they died in poverty and disgrace, and the rest on a scaffold or a gibbet.

Among the rest there was one person whose case appeared a little singular. He had a youth about eighteen years old standing by his side. He told me he had for many years been commander of a ship, and in the sea fight of Actium had the good fortune to break through the enemy's great line of battle, sink three of their capital ships, and take a fourth, which was the sole cause of Antony's flight, and of the victory that ensued; that the youth

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

standing by him, his only son, was killed in action. He added that upon the confidence of some merit, the war being at an end, he went to Rome, and solicited at the court of Augustus to be preferred to a greater ship, whose commander had been killed; but without any regard to his pretensions, it was given to a youth who had never seen the sea, the son of Libertine, who waited on one of the emperor's mistresses. Returning back to his own vessel, he was charged with neglect of duty, and the ship given to a favorite page of Publicola, the vice-admiral; whereupon he retired to a poor farm at a great distance from Rome, and there ended his life. I was so curious to know the truth of this story, that I desired Agrippa might be called, who was admiral in that fight. He appeared, and confirmed the whole account, but with much more advantage to the captain, whose modesty had extenuated or concealed a great part of his merit.

I was surprised to find corruption grown so high and so quick in that empire, by the force of luxury so lately introduced, which made me less wonder at many parallel cases in other countries, where vices of all kinds have reigned so much longer, and where the whole praise as well as pillage has been engrossed by the chief commander, who perhaps had the least title to either.

As every person called up made exactly the same appearance he had done in the world, it gave me melancholy reflections to observe how much the race of human kind was degenerate among us, within these hundred years past. How the pox under all its consequences and denominations had altered every lineament of an English countenance, shortened the size of bodies, unbraced the nerves, relaxed the sinews and muscles, introduced a sallow complexion, and rendered the flesh loose and rancid.

I descended so low as to desire that some English yeomen of the old stamp might be summoned to appear, once so famous for the simplicity of their manners, diet and dress, for justice in their dealings, for their true spirit of liberty, for their valor and love of their country. Neither could I be wholly unmoved after comparing the living with the dead, when I considered how all these pure native virtues were prostituted for a piece of money by their grandchildren, who in selling

their votes, and managing at elections, have acquired every vice and corruption that can possibly be learned in a court.

On yet another voyage Gulliver was the captain of a ship which the crew of outcasts decided to overrun, and they set Gulliver down alone at the nearest land. He discovered that the intelligent beings of this land where *Houyhnhnms*. The word *Houyhnhnm*, in their tongue, signifies a horse, and in its etymology, the perfection of nature. One of the quality horses, being curious to hear Gulliver's story, took it upon himself to teach Gulliver the *Houyhnhnm* language. Gulliver refers to this horse as his "Master". After a couple of years, due to his talent for languages, Gulliver was able to understand most of what was asked of him and was able to give fairly good answers. Gulliver recalls one of the conversations he had with his Master:

What you have told me (said my master) upon the subject of war, does indeed discover most admirably the effects of that reason you pretend to: however, it is happy that the shame is greater than the danger; and that nature has left you utterly incapable of doing much mischief.

For your mouths lying flat with your faces, you can hardly bite each other to any purpose, unless by consent. Then as to the claws upon your feet before and behind, they are so short and tender, that one of our Yahoos would drive a dozen of yours before him. And therefore in recounting the numbers of those who have been killed in battle, I cannot but think that you have said the thing which is not.

I could not forbear shaking my head and smiling a little at his ignorance. And being no stranger to the art of war, I gave him a description of cannons, culverins, muskets, carabines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, battles, sieges, retreats, attacks, undermines, countermines, bombardments, sea fights; ships sunk with a thousand men, twenty thousand killed on each side; dying groans, limbs flying in the air, smoke, noise, confusion, trampling to death under horses' feet; flight, pursuit, victory; fields strewn with carcasses left for food to dogs, and

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

wolves, and birds of prey; plundering, stripping, ravishing, burning, and destroying. And to set forth the valor of my own dear countrymen, I assured him that I had seen them blow up a hundred enemies at once in a siege, and as many in a ship, and beheld the dead bodies come down in pieces from the clouds, to the great diversion of the spectators.

I was going on to more particulars, when my master commanded me silence. He said whoever understood the nature of Yahoos might easily believe it possible for so vile animals to be capable of every action I had named, if their strength and cunning squalled their malice. But as my discourse had increased his abhorrence of the whole species, so he found it gave him a disturbance in his mind, to which he was wholly a stranger before. He thought his ears being used to such abominable words, might by degrees admit them with less detestation. That although he hated the Yahoos of this country, yet he no more blamed them for their odious qualities, than he did a gnnayh (a bird of prey) for its cruelty, or a sharp stone for cutting his hoof. But when a creature pretending to reason could be capable of such enormities, he dreaded lest the corruption of that faculty might be worse than brutality itself. He seemed therefore confident, that instead of reason, we were only possessed of some quality fitted to increase our natural vices; as the reflection from a troubled stream returns the image of an ill-shapen body, not only larger, but more distorted.

He added, that he had heard too much upon the subject of war, both in this and some former discourses. There was another point which a little perplexed him at present. I had informed him, that some of our crew left their country on account of being ruined by Law; that I had already explained the meaning of the word; but he was at a loss how it should come to pass, that the law which was intended for every man's preservation, should be any man's ruin. Therefore he desired to be farther satisfied what I meant by *law*, and the dispensers thereof, according to the present practice in my own country; because he thought Nature and Reason were sufficient guides for a reasonable animal, as we pretended to be, in showing us what we ought to do, and what to avoid.

I assured his Honour, that law was a science wherein I had not much conversed, further than by employing advocates in vain, upon some injustices that had been done me; however, I would give him all the satisfaction I was able.

I said there was a society of men among us, bred up from their youth in the art of proving by words multiplied for the purpose, that white is black, and black is white, according as they are paid. To this society all the rest of the people are slaves. For example, if my neighbour hath a mind to my cow, he hires a lawyer to prove that he ought to have my cow from me. I must then hire another to defend my right, it being against the rules of law that any man should be allowed to speak for himself. Now in this case, I who am the true owner lie under two great disadvantages. First; my lawyer, being practised almost from his cradle in defending falsehood, is quite out of his element when he would be an advocate for justice, which as an office unnatural, he always attempts with great awkwardness, if not with ill-will. The second disadvantage is, that my lawyer must proceed with great caution, or else he will be reprimanded by the Judges, and abhorred by his brethren, as one who would lessen the practice of the law. And therefore I have but two methods to preserve my cow. The first is to gain over my adversary's lawyer with a double fee, who will then betray his client by insinuating that he hath justice on his side. The second way is for my lawyer to make my cause appear as unjust as he can, by allowing the cow to belong to my adversary; and this if it be skilfully done will certainly bespeak the favour of the Bench.

Now, your Honour is to know that these Judges are persons appointed to decide all controversies of property, as well as for the trial of criminals, and picked out from the most dextrous lawyers who are grown old or lazy, and having been biassed all their lives against truth and equity, lie under such a fatal necessity of favouring fraud, perjury, and oppression, that I have known several of them refuse a large bribe from the side where justice lay, rather than injure the *Faculty* by doing anything unbecoming their nature or their office.

It is a maxim among these lawyers, that whatever hath been done before, may legally

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

be done again: and therefore they take special care to record all the decisions formerly made against common justice and the general reason of mankind. These, under the name of *precedents*, they produce as authorities to justify the most iniquitous opinions; and the Judges never fail of directing accordingly.

In pleading, they studiously avoid entering into the *merits* of the cause; but are loud, violent and tedious in dwelling upon all *circumstances* which are not to the purpose. For instance, in the case already mentioned; they never desire to know what claim or title my adversary hath to my cow, but whether the said cow were red or black, her horns long or short; whether the field I graze her in be round or square, whether she were milked at home or abroad, what diseases she is subject to, and the like; after which they consult *precedents*, adjourn the cause from time to time, and in ten, or thirty years come to an issue.

It is likewise to be observed that this society hath a peculiar cant and jargon of their own, that no other mortal can understand, and wherein all their laws are written, which they take special care to multiply; whereby they have wholly confounded the very essence of truth and falsehood, of right and wrong; so that it will take thirty years to decide whether the field, left me by my ancestors for six generations, belong to me or to a stranger three hundred miles off.

In the trial of persons accused for crimes against the state the method is much more short and commendable: the Judge first sends to sound the disposition of those in power, after which he can easily hang or save the criminal, strictly preserving all the forms of law.

Here my master, interposing, said it was a pity, that creatures endowed with such prodigious abilities of mind as these lawyers, by the description I gave of them, must certainly be, were not rather encouraged to be instructors of others in wisdom and knowledge. In answer to which, I assured his Honour, that in all points out of their own trade they were usually the most ignorant and stupid generation among us, the most despicable in common conversation, avowed enemies to all knowledge and learning, and equally disposed to pervert the general reason of man-

kind in every other subject of discourse, as in that of their own profession.

The reader may be disposed to wonder how I could prevail on myself to give so free a representation of my own species, among a race of mortals who were already too apt to conceive the vilest opinion of human kind, from that entire congruity betwixt me and their Yahoos. But I must freely confess that the many virtues of those excellent quadrupeds placed in opposite view to human corruptions, had so far opened my eyes and enlarged my understanding, that I began to view the actions and passions of man in a very different light, and to think the honor of my own kind not worth managing; which, besides, it was impossible for me to do before a person of so acute a judgment as my master, who daily convinced me of a thousand faults in myself, whereof I had not the least perception before, and which among us would never be numbered even among human infirmities. I had likewise learned from his example an utter detestation of all falsehood or disguise, and truth appeared so amiable to me, that I determined upon sacrificing everything to it.

His Honor had further observed that a female Yahoo would often stand behind a bank or a bush, to gaze on the young males passing by, and then appear, and hide, using many antic gestures and grimaces, at which time it was observed that she had a most offensive smell; and when any of the males advanced, would slowly retire, looking often back, and with a counterfeit show of fear, run off into some convenient place where she knew the male would follow her.

At other times if a female stranger came among them, three or four of her own sex would get about her, and stare and chatter, and grin, and smell her all over; and then turn off with gestures that seemed to express contempt and disdain.

As these noble Houyhnhnms are endowed by nature with a general disposition to all virtues, and have no conceptions or ideas of what is evil in a rational creature, so their grand maxim is to cultivate reason, and to be wholly governed by it. Neither is reason among them a point problematical as with us,

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

where men can argue with plausibility on both sides of the question; but strikes you with immediate conviction; as it must needs do where it is not mingled, obscured, or discolored by passion and interest. I remember it was with extreme difficulty that I could bring my master to understand the meaning of the word opinion, or how a point could be disputable; because reason taught us to affirm or deny only where we are certain, and beyond our knowledge we cannot do either. So that controversies, wranglings, disputes, and positiveness in false or dubious propositions, are evils unknown among the Houyhnhnms. In the like manner when I used to explain to him our several systems of natural philosophy, he would laugh that a creature pretending to reason should value itself upon the knowledge of other people's conjectures, and in things where that knowledge, if it were certain, could be of no use. Wherein he agreed entirely with the sentiments of Socrates, as Plato delivers them; which I mention as the highest honor I can do that prince of philosophers. I have often since reflected what destruction such a doctrine would make in the libraries of Europe, and how many paths to fame would be then shut up in the learned world.

Friendship and benevolence are the two principal virtues among the Houyhnhnms, and these not confined to particular objects, but universal to the whole race. For a stranger from the remotest part is equally treated with the nearest neighbor, and wherever he goes looks upon himself as at home. They preserve decency and civility in the highest degrees, but are altogether ignorant of ceremony. They have no fondness for their colts or foals, but the care they take in educating them proceeds entirely from the dictates of reason. And I observed my master to show the same affection to his neighbor's issue that he had for his own. They will have it that nature teaches them to love the whole species, and it is reason only that makes a distinction of persons, where there is a superior degree of virtue.

One of these grand assemblies was held in my time, about three months before my departure, whither my master went as the representative of our district. In this council was resumed their old debate, and indeed, the

only debate which ever happened in that country; whereof my master after his return gave me a very particular account.

The question to be debated was whether the Yahoos should be exterminated from the face of the earth. One of the members for the affirmative offered several arguments of great strength and weight, alleging that as the Yahoos were the most filthy, noisome, and deformed animal which nature ever produced, so they were the most restive and indocible, mischievous and malicious: they would privately suck the teats of the Houyhnhnms' cows, kill and devour their cats, trample down their oats and grass, if they were not continually watched, and commit a thousand other extravagancies. He took notice of a general tradition, that Yahoos had not been always in that country; but that many ages ago two of these brutes appeared together upon a mountain, whether produced by the heat of the sun upon corrupted mud and slime, or from the ooze and froth of the sea, was never known. That these Yahoos engendered, and their brood in a short time grew so numerous as to overrun and infest the whole nation. That the Houyhnhnms to get rid of this evil, made a general hunting, and at last enclosed the whole herd; and destroying the elder, every Houyhnhnm kept two young ones in a kennel, and brought them to such a degree of tameness, as an animal so savage by nature can be capable of acquiring; using them for draught and carriage. That there seemed to be much truth in this tradition, and that those creatures could not be Ylnhniamshy (or aborigines of the land), because of the violent hatred the Houyhnhnms, as well as all other animals, bore them; which although their evil disposition sufficiently deserved, could never have arrived at so high a degree, if they had been aborigines, or else they would have long since been rooted out. That the inhabitants taking a fancy to use the service of the Yahoos, had very imprudently neglected to cultivate the breed of asses, which were a comely animal, easily kept, more tame and orderly, without any offensive smell, strong enough for labor, although they yield to the other in agility of body; and if their braying be no agreeable sound, it is far preferable to the horrible howlings of the Yahoos.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

I know not whether it may be worth observing that the Houyhnhnms have no word in their language to express any thing that is evil, except what they borrow from the deformities or ill qualities of the Yahoos. Thus they denote the folly of a servant, an omission of a child, a stone that cuts their feet, a continuance of foul or unseasonable weather, and the like, by adding to each the epithet of Yahoo. For instance, Hhnm Yahoo, Whnaholm Yahoo, Ynlhmndwihlma Yahoo, and an ill-contrived house Ynholmhmrohlnw Yahoo.

When all was ready, and the day came for my departure, I took leave of my master and lady and the whole family, my eyes flowing with tears, and my heart quite sunk with grief. But his Honor, out of curiosity, and perhaps (if I may speak it without vanity) partly out of kindness, was determined to see me in my canoe, and got several of his neighboring friends to accompany him. I was forced to wait above an hour for the tide, and then observing the wind very fortunately bearing towards the island to which I intended to steer my course, I took a second leave of my master; but as I was going to prostrate myself to kiss his hoof, he did me the honor to raise it gently to my mouth. I am not ignorant how much I have been censured for mentioning this last particular. For my detractors are pleased to think it improbable that so illustrious a person should descend to give so great a mark of distinction to a creature so inferior as I. Neither have I forgot how apt some travelers are to boast of extraordinary favors they have received. But if these censors were better acquainted with the noble and courteous disposition of the Houyhnhnms, they would soon change their opinion.

I paid my respects to the rest of the Houyhnhnms in his Honor's company; then getting into my canoe, I pushed off from shore.

As I was looking about for a secure landing-place, I saw a sail to the north-northeast, which appearing every minute more visible, I was in some doubt whether I should wait for them or no; but at last my detestation of the Yahoo race prevailed, and turning my canoe, I sailed and paddled together to the south, and

got into the same creek from whence I set out in the morning, choosing rather to trust myself among these barbarians, than live with European Yahoos. I drew up my canoe as close as I could to the shore, and hid myself behind a stone by the little brook, which, as I have already said, was excellent water.

The ship came within half a league of this creek, and sent her long-boat with vessels to take in fresh water (for the place it seems was very well known), but I did not observe it till the boat was almost on shore, and it was too late to seek another hiding-place. The seamen at their landing observed my canoe, and rummaging it all over, easily conjectured that the owner could not be far off. Four of them well armed searched every cranny and lurking-hole, till at last they found me flat on my face behind the stone. They gazed awhile in admiration at my strange uncouth dress, my coat made of skins, my wooden-soled shoes, and my furred stockings; from whence, however, they concluded I was not a native of the place, who all go naked. One of the seamen in Portuguese bid me rise, and asked who I was. I understood that language very well, and getting upon feet, said I was a poor Yahoo, banished from the Houyhnhnms, and desired they would please to let me depart. They admired to hear me answer them in their own tongue, and saw by my complexion I must be a European, but were at a loss to know what I meant by Yahoos and Houyhnhnms, and at the same time fell a laughing at my strange tone in speaking, which resembled the neighing of a horse. I trembled all the while between fear and hatred: I again desired leave to depart, and was gently moving to my canoe; but they laid hold of me, desiring to know what country I was of, whence I came, with many other questions. I told them I was born in England, from whence I came about five years ago, and then their country and ours were at peace. I therefore hoped they would not treat me as an enemy, since I meant them no harm, but was a poor Yahoo, seeking some desolate place where to pass the remainder of his unfortunate life.

When they began to talk, I thought I never heard or saw any thing so unnatural; for it appeared to me as dog or a cow should speak in England, or a Yahoo in Houyhnhm-land. The honest Portuguese were equally amazed

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

at my strange dress, and the odd manner of delivering my words, which however they understood very well. They spoke to me with great humanity, and said they were sure the Captain would carry me gratis to Lisbon, from whence I might return to my own country; that two of the seamen would go back to the ship, inform the Captain of what they had seen, and receive his order; in the mean time, unless I would give my solemn oath not to fly, they would secure me by force. I thought it best to comply with their proposal. They were very curious to know my story, but I gave them very little satisfaction; and they all conjectured my misfortunes had impaired my reason. In two hours the boat, which went laden with vessels of water, returned with the Captain's command to fetch me on board. I fell on my knees to preserve my liberty; but all was in vain, and the men having tied me with cords, heaved me into the boat, from whence I was taken into the ship, and from thence into the Captain's cabin.

My wife and family received me with great surprise and joy, because they concluded me certainly dead; but I must freely confess the sight of them filled me only with hatred, disgust, and contempt, and the more by reflecting on the near alliance I had to them. For although since my unfortunate exile from the Houyhnhnm country, I had compelled myself to tolerate the sight of Yahoos, and to converse with Don Pedro de Mendez, yet my memory and imagination were perpetually filled with the virtues and ideas of those exalted Houyhnhnms. And when I began to consider that by copulating with one of the Yahoo species I had become a parent of more, it struck me with the utmost shame, confusion, and horror.

As soon as I entered the house, my wife took me in her arms and kissed me, at which, having not been used to the touch of that odious animal for so many years, I fell in a swoon for almost an hour. At the time I am writing it is five years since my last return to England: during the first year I could not endure my wife or children in my presence, the very smell of them was intolerable, much less could I suffer them to eat in the same room. To this hour they dare not presume to touch my bread, or drink out of the same cup, neither was I ever able to let one of them take

me by the hand. The first money I laid out was to buy two young stone-horses, which I keep in a good stable, and next to them the groom is my greatest favorite; for I feel my spirits revived by the smell he contracts in the stable. My horses understand me tolerably well; I converse with them at least four hours every day. They are strangers to bridle or saddle; they live in great amity with me, and friendship to each other.¹¹²

The Satire of Samuel Butler

- The Colleges of Unreason -

(An excerpt from *Erewhon* - first published 1872)

Our brave author has ventured over the forbidding range which separates his homeland from the strange and isolated land of Erewhon. He discovers this land to be occupied by a developed civilization and is made a guest by the Erewhonian people. After several months he is allowed to visit the hallowed Colleges of Unreason ...

After supper Mr. Thims told me a good deal about the system of education which is here practised. I already knew a part of what I heard, but much was new to me, and I obtained a better idea of the Erewhonian position than I had done hitherto: nevertheless there were parts of the scheme of which I could not comprehend the fitness, although I fully admit that this inability was probably the result of my having been trained so very differently and to my being then much out of sorts.

The main feature in their system is the prominence which they give to a study which I can only translate by the word "hypothetics." They argue thus -- that to teach a boy merely the nature of the things which exist in the world round him, and about which he will have to be conversant during his whole life, would be giving him but a narrow and shallow conception of the universe, which it is urged might contain all manner of things which are not now to be found therein. To open his eyes to these possibilities, and so to prepare him for all sorts of emergencies, is the object of this system of hypothetics. To imagine a set of utterly strange and impossible contingencies,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

and require the youths to give intelligent answers to the questions that arise therefrom, is reckoned the fittest conceivable way of preparing them for the actual conduct of their affairs in after life.

Thus they are taught what is called the hypothetical language for many of their best years -- a language which was originally composed at a time when the country was in a very different state of civilisation to what it is at present, a state which has long since disappeared and been superseded. Many valuable maxims and noble thoughts which were at one time concealed in it have become current in their modern literature, and have been translated over and over again into the language now spoken. Surely then it would seem enough that the study of the original language should be confined to the few whose instincts led them naturally to pursue it.

But the Erewhonians think differently; the store they set by this hypothetic language can hardly be believed; they will even give any one a maintenance for life if he attains a considerable proficiency in the study of it; nay, they will spend years in learning to translate some of their own good poetry into the hypothetical language -- to do so with fluency being reckoned a distinguishing mark of a scholar and a gentleman. Heaven forbid that I should be flippant, but it appeared to me to be a wanton waste of good human energy that men should spend years and years in the perfection of so barren an exercise, when their own civilisation presented problems by the hundred which cried aloud for solution and would have paid the solver handsomely; but people know their own affairs best. If the youths chose it for themselves I should have wondered less; but they do not choose it; they have it thrust upon them, and for the most part are disinclined towards it. I can only say that all I heard in defence of the system was insufficient to make me think very highly of its advantages.

The arguments in favour of the deliberate development of the unreasoning faculties were much more cogent. But here they depart from the principles on which they justify their study of hypothetics; for they base the importance which they assign to hypothetics upon the fact of their being a preparation for the extraordinary, while their study of Unrea-

son rests upon its developing those faculties which are required for the daily conduct of affairs. Hence their professorships of Inconsistency and Evasion, in both of which studies the youths are examined before being allowed to proceed to their degree in hypothetics. The more earnest and conscientious students attain to a proficiency in these subjects which is quite surprising; there is hardly any inconsistency so glaring but they soon learn to defend it, or injunction so clear that they cannot find some pretext for disregarding it.

Life, they urge, would be intolerable if men were to be guided in all they did by reason and reason only. Reason betrays men into the drawing of hard and fast lines, and to the defining by language -- language being like the sun, which rears and then scorches. Extremes are alone logical, but they are always absurd; the mean is illogical, but an illogical mean is better than the sheer absurdity of an extreme. There are no follies and no unreasonablenesses so great as those which can apparently be irrefragably defended by reason itself, and there is hardly an error into which men may not easily be led if they base their conduct upon reason only.

Reason might very possibly abolish the double currency; it might even attack the personality of Hope and Justice. Besides, people have such a strong natural bias towards it that they will seek it for themselves and act upon it quite as much as or more than is good for them: there is no need of encouraging reason. With unreason the case is different. She is the natural complement of reason, without whose existence reason itself were non-existent.

If, then, reason would be non-existent were there no such thing as unreason, surely it follows that the more unreason there is, the more reason there must be also? Hence the necessity for the development of unreason, even in the interests of reason herself. The Professors of Unreason deny that they undervalue reason: none can be more convinced than they are, that if the double currency cannot be rigorously deduced as a necessary consequence of human reason, the double currency should cease forthwith; but they say that it must be deduced from no narrow and exclusive view of reason which should deprive that admirable faculty of the one-half of

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

its own existence. Unreason is a part of reason; it must therefore be allowed its full share in stating the initial conditions.

Of genius they make no account, for they say that every one is a genius, more or less. No one is so physically sound that no part of him will be even a little unsound, and no one is so diseased but that some part of him will be healthy -- so no man is so mentally and morally sound, but that he will be in part both mad and wicked; and no man is so mad and wicked but he will be sensible and honourable in part. In like manner there is no genius who is not also a fool, and no fool who is not also a genius.

When I talked about originality and genius to some gentlemen whom I met at a supper party given by Mr. Thims in my honour, and said that original thought ought to be encouraged, I had to eat my words at once. Their view evidently was that genius was like offences -- needs must that it come, but woe unto that man through whom it comes. A man's business, they hold, is to think as his neighbours do, for Heaven help him if he thinks good what they count bad. And really it is hard to see how the Erewhonian theory differs from our own, for the word "idiot," only means a person who forms his opinions for himself.

The venerable Professor of Worldly Wisdom, a man verging on eighty but still hale, spoke to me very seriously on this subject in consequence of the few words that I had imprudently let fall in defence of genius. He was one of those who carried most weight in the university, and had the reputation of having done more perhaps than any other living man to suppress any kind of originality.

"It is not our business," he said, "to help students to think for themselves. Surely this is the very last thing which one who wishes them well should encourage them to do. Our duty is to ensure that they shall think as we do, or at any rate, as we hold it expedient to say we do." In some respects, however, he was thought to hold somewhat radical opinions, for he was President of the Society for the Suppression of Useless Knowledge, and for the Completer Obliteration of the Past.

As regards the tests that a youth must pass before he can get a degree, I found that they

have no class lists, and discourage anything like competition among the students; this, indeed, they regard as self-seeking and un-neighbourly. The examinations are conducted by way of papers written by the candidate on set subjects, some of which are known to him beforehand, while others are devised with a view of testing his general capacity and *savior faire*.

My friend the Professor of Worldly Wisdom was the terror of the greater number of students; and, so far as I could judge, he very well might be, for he had taken his Professorship more seriously than any of the other Professors had done. I heard of his having plucked one poor fellow for want of sufficient vagueness in his saving clauses paper. Another was sent down for having written an article on a scientific subject without having made free enough use of the words "carefully," "patiently," and "earnestly." One man was refused a degree for being too often and too seriously in the right, while a few days before I came a whole batch had been plucked for insufficient distrust of printed matter.

About this there was just then rather a ferment, for it seems that the Professor had written an article in the leading university magazine, which was well known to be by him, and which abounded in all sorts of plausible blunders. He then set a paper which afforded the examinees an opportunity of repeating these blunders -- which, believing the article to be by their own examiner, they of course did. The Professor plucked every single one of them, but his action was considered to have been not quite handsome.

I told them of Homer's noble line to the effect that a man should strive ever to be foremost and in all things to outvie his peers; but they said that no wonder the countries in which such a detestable maxim was held in admiration were always flying at one another's throats.

"Why," asked one Professor, "should a man want to be better than his neighbours? Let him be thankful if he is no worse."

I ventured feebly to say that I did not see how progress could be made in any art or science, or indeed in anything at all, without more or less self-seeking, and hence unanimity.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

"Of course it cannot," said the Professor, "and therefore we object to progress."

After which there was no more to be said. Later on, however, a young Professor took me aside and said he did not think I quite understood their views about progress.

"We like progress," he said, "but it must commend itself to the common sense of the people. If a man gets to know more than his neighbours he should keep his knowledge to himself till he has sounded them, and seen whether they agree, or are likely to agree with him." He said it was as immoral to be too far in front of one's own age as to lag too far behind it. "If a man can carry his neighbours with him, he may say what he likes; but if not, what insult can be more gratuitous than the telling them what they do not want to know? A man should remember that intellectual over-indulgence is one of the most insidious and disgraceful forms that excess can take. Granted that every one should exceed more or less, inasmuch as absolutely perfect sanity would drive any man mad the moment he reached it, but..."

He was now warming to his subject and I was beginning to wonder how I should get rid of him, when the party broke up, and though I promised to call on him before I left, I was unfortunately prevented from doing so.

I have now said enough to give English readers some idea of the strange views which the Erewhonians hold concerning unreason, hypothetics, and education generally. In many respects they were sensible enough, but I could not get over the hypothetics, especially the turning their own good poetry into the hypothetical language. In the course of my stay I met one youth who told me that for fourteen years the hypothetical language had been almost the only thing that he had been taught, although he had never (to his credit, as it seemed to me) shown the slightest proclivity towards it, while he had been endowed with not inconsiderable ability for several other branches of human learning. He assured me that he would never open another hypothetical book after he had taken his degree, but would follow out the bent of his own inclinations. This was well enough, but who could give him his fourteen years back again?

I sometimes wondered how it was that the mischief done was not more clearly perceptible, and that the young men and women grew

up as sensible and goodly as they did, in spite of the attempts almost deliberately made to warp and stunt their growth. Some doubtless received damage, from which they suffered to their life's end; but many seemed little or none the worse, and some, almost the better. The reason would seem to be that the natural instinct of the lads in most cases so absolutely rebelled against their training, that do what the teachers might they could never get them to pay serious heed to it. The consequence was that the boys only lost their time, and not so much of this as might have been expected, for in their hours of leisure they were actively engaged in exercises and sports which developed their physical nature, and made them at any rate strong and healthy.

Moreover those who had any special tastes could not be restrained from developing them: they would learn what they wanted to learn and liked, in spite of obstacles which seemed rather to urge them on than to discourage them, while for those who had no special capacity, the loss of time was of comparatively little moment; but in spite of these alleviations of the mischief, I am sure that much harm was done to the children of the subwealthy classes, by the system which passes current among the Erewhonians as education. The poorest children suffered least -- if destruction and death have heard the sound of wisdom, to a certain extent poverty has done so also.

And yet perhaps, after all, it is better for a country that its seats of learning should do more to suppress mental growth than to encourage it. Were it not for a certain priggishness which these places infuse into so great a number of their *alumni*, genuine work would become dangerously common. It is essential that by far the greater part of what is said or done in the world should be so ephemeral as to take itself away quickly; it should keep good for twenty-four hours, or even twice as long, but it should not be good enough a week hence to prevent people from going on to something else. No doubt the marvellous development of journalism in England, as also the fact that our seats of learning aim rather at fostering mediocrity than anything higher, is due to our subconscious recognition of the fact that it is even more necessary to check exuberance of mental development than to encourage it. There can be no doubt

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

that this is what our academic bodies do, and they do it the more effectually because they do it only subconsciously. They think they are advancing healthy mental assimilation and digestion, whereas in reality they are little better than cancer in the stomach.

Let me return, however, to the Erewhonians.

Nothing surprised me more than to see the occasional flashes of common sense with which one branch of study or another was lit up, while not a single ray fell upon so many others. I was particularly struck with this on strolling into the Art School of the University. Here I found that the course of study was divided into two branches -- the practical and the commercial -- no student being permitted to continue his studies in the actual practise of the art he had taken up, unless he made equal progress in its commercial history.

Thus those who were studying painting were examined at frequent intervals in the prices which all the leading pictures of the last fifty or a hundred years had realised, and in the fluctuations in their values when (as often happened) they had been sold and resold three or four times. The artist, they contend, is a dealer in pictures, and it is as important for him to learn how to adapt his wares to the market, and to know approximately what kind of a picture will fetch how much, as it is for him to be able to paint the picture. This, I suppose, is what the French mean by laying so much stress upon "values."

As regards the city itself, the more I saw the more enchanted I became. I dare not trust myself with any description of the exquisite beauty of the different colleges, and their walks and gardens. Truly in these things alone there must be a hallowing and refining influence which is in itself half an education, and which no amount of error can wholly spoil. I was introduced to many of the Professors, who showed me every hospitality and kindness; nevertheless I could hardly avoid a sort of suspicion that some of those whom I was taken to see had been so long engrossed in their own study of hypotheticals that they had become the exact antitheses of the Athenians in the days of St. Paul; for whereas the Athenians spent their lives in nothing save to see and to hear some new thing, there were some here who seemed to devote themselves to the avoidance of every opinion with which

they were not perfectly familiar, and regarded their own brains as a sort of sanctuary, to which if an opinion had once resorted, none other was to attack it.

I should warn the reader, however, that I was rarely sure what the men whom I met while staying with Mr. Thims really meant; for there was no getting anything out of them if they scented even a suspicion that they might be what they call "Giving themselves away." As there is hardly any subject on which this suspicion cannot arise, I found it difficult to get definite opinions from any of them, except on such subjects as the weather, eating and drinking, holiday excursions, or games of skill.

If they cannot wriggle out of expressing an opinion of some sort, they will commonly retail those of some one who has already written upon the subject, and conclude by saying that though they quite admit that there is an element of truth in what the writer has said, there are many points on which they are unable to agree with him. Which these points were, I invariably found myself unable to determine; indeed, it seemed to be counted the perfection of scholarship and good breeding among them to have -- much less to express -- an opinion on any subject on which it might prove later that they had been mistaken. The art of sitting gracefully on a fence has never, I should think, been brought to greater perfection than at the Erewhonian Colleges of Unreason.

Even when, wriggle as they may, they find themselves pinned down to some expression of definite opinion, as often as not they will argue in support of what they perfectly well know to be untrue. I repeatedly met with reviews and articles even in their best journals, between the lines of which I had little difficulty in detecting a sense exactly contrary to the one ostensibly put forward. So well is this understood that a man must be a mere tyro in the arts of Erewhonian polite society, unless he instinctively suspects a hidden "yea" in every "nay" that meets him. Granted that it comes to much the same in the end, for it does not matter whether "yea" is called "yea" or "nay," so long as it is understood which it is to be; but our own more direct way of calling a spade a spade, rather than a rake, with the intention that every one should understand it as a spade, seems more satisfac-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

tory. On the other hand, the Erewhonian system lends itself better to the suppression of that downrightness which it seems the express aim of Erewhonian philosophy of discountenance.

However this may be, the fear-of-giving-them-selves-away disease was fatal to the intelligence of those infected by it, and almost every one at the College of Unreason had caught it to a greater or less degree. After a few years atrophy of the opinions invariably

supervened, and the sufferer became stone dead to everything except the more superficial aspects of those material objects with which he came most in contact. The expression on the faces of these people was repellent; they did not, however, seem particularly unhappy, for they none of them had the faintest idea that they were in reality more dead than alive. No cure for this disgusting fear-of-giving-themselves-away disease has yet been discovered.¹¹³

“A TALK BY HAKUIN” (N.D.)

*Loathed by a thousand buddhas
In the realm of a thousand buddhas.
Hated by the demons
Among the troops of demons,
This foul-smelling blind bald-head
Appears again on someone's screen.*

*In the realm of the thousand buddhas
He is hated by the thousand buddhas;
Among the crowd of demons
He is detested by the crowd of demons.
He crushes the silent-illumination heretics of today,
And massacres the heterodox blind monks
of this generation.
This filthy blind old shavepate
Adds more foulness still to foulness.*

(Introductory to Lectures on the Records of Old Sokko)

When the resolve to seek the Way first began to burn in me, I was drawn by the spirits of the hills and streams among the high peaks of Li-yama. Deep in the forests of Narasawa, I came upon a decrepit old teacher in a mountain hermitage. His name was Shoju Rojin. His style was Etan. His Dharma-grandfather was National Master Daien. His Dharma-father was Shido Munan. He was a blind old bonze filled with deadly venom - true and authentic to the core.

He was always telling students:

"This Zen school of ours began to decline at the end of the Southern Sung. By the time it had reached the Ming the transmission had fallen to earth, all petered out. Now, what remains of its real poison is found in Japan alone. But even here there's not much. It's like scanning the midday sky for stars. As for you, you smelly blind shavepates, you ragtag little lackwits, you haven't stumbled upon it even in your dreams."

Another time, he said: "You're imposters, the whole lot of you. You look like Zen monks, but you don't understand Zen. You remind me of the monks in the teaching schools - but you haven't mastered the teachings. Some of you resemble precepts monks, yet their precepts are beyond you. There is a resemblance to the Confucians - but you haven't grasped Confucianism either. What, then, are you really like? I'll tell you. Large rice-bags, fitted all out in black robes."

Here is a story he told us:

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

"There is a Barrier of crucial importance. In front of it sit a row of stern officials, each of whom is there to test the ability of those who wish to negotiate the Barrier. Unless you pass their muster, you don't get through.

"Along comes a man, announcing that he is a wheelright. He sits down, fashions a wheel, shows it to the officials, and they let him pass. Another person walks up, an artist. He produces a brush and paints them a picture. They usher him through the gates. A singing girl is allowed to pass after she sings them a refrain from one of the current songs. She is followed by a priest of one of the Pure Land sects. He intones loud invocations of the Nembutsu - 'Namu-amida-butsu,' 'Namu-amida-butsu.' The gates swing open and he proceeds on his way.

"At this point, another man clothed in black robes appears. He says that he is a Zen monk. One of the guardians of the Barrier remarks that 'Zen is the crowning pinnacle of all the Buddhas.' He then asks: '*What is Zen?*'

"All the monk can do is stand there, in a blank daze, looking like a pile of brushwood. The officials take one look at the nervous sweat pouring from under his arms and write him off as a rank imposter. A highly suspicious and totally undesirable character. So he winds up as a poor devil of an outcast, condemned to a wretched existence outside the Barrier. What a pitiful turn of events."

Shoju also told us: "Suppose at some future day you men have temples of your own. You receive an invitation from one of your parishioners, asking you to visit him at his home. When you arrive with your head monk and some of your students, you are ushered into a large room, where you find layers of thick, soft cushions to sit upon. Dishes filled with rare delicacies are arranged before you. You sit there in high spirits, partaking of the food without a single qualm, regarding it as your due. When you finish eating, as you are enjoying yourself amid the loud talk and boisterous laughter, one of the people present addresses you, and brings up a difficult point of Zen - the kind that furrows the brows of Zen monks. He suggests casually that you explain it. At that moment, what kind of response will you make? Your heart will probably start to thump wildly in your chest. Your body will break out in a muck of sweat. Your distress will cast a black pall over the entire room.

"So inasmuch as you are members of the Zen school, you should concentrate diligently on your training. If you don't, you will be unwittingly sowing the seeds of your own shame and disgrace. There's no telling when you'll find yourself in such a harrowing situation. It's too terrifying to contemplate."

I know a wealthy family in the province of Shinano. They have a large inherited fortune, and the influence they wield rivals that of the provincial daimyo himself. The family is so large that they must ring a dinner bell to call them all together. The great and powerful are frequent visitors. Al-

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

though they have no family business as such, they have been able to maintain a quiet and comfortable existence.

But recently they started brewing sake. They added male and female servants to the staff. The water mill now grinds away day and night hulling rice. A continuous procession of grain carts thunders heavily in through the gates. Their prosperity has increased tenfold over what it was before. Ten thousand bushels of rice are said to be consumed daily in the brewing of sake.

An old man living nearby and witnessing these events, said: "Those folks are finished. Their prosperity cannot continue much longer. What you now see is really a symptom of serious trouble. When the inner workings decay, the outer aspect always swells like that. They will probably try their hand at selling grain. Or open a shop to sell medicinal herbs. But before long they will have to dispose of them too."

When my teacher Shoji Rojin heard the old man's prediction, he heaved a heavy sigh.

"I know just what he means. Since the Sung period, our patriarchal school has been in constant decline. Zen monks have extended their interests into a variety of different fields. It's just like the family in that story."

As he finished speaking, his eyes were swimming in tears.

I have recorded as I remember them a few brief examples of Old Shoji's instructions. I thought that they would give you an idea of the anger, the scoldings and verbal abuse, the shouts of encouragement, that he used in his daily teaching, as well as of the deep concern and sad regrets he often voiced about the present state of the Zen school.¹¹⁴

Recommended reading:

The Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin, translated by Norman Waddell (if you can find it)

THE THINKING MAN’S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

EXPULSION FROM NE PLUS ULTRA 2003-2004

A Clash between Spiritual Thinking and Academia

Sun, Dec 14, 2003 - Thurs, Jan 8, 2004

Ne Plus Ultra is a discussion board which bills itself as an exclusive, invitation-only forum for highly intelligent, creative people. Unfortunately, when I was there, it was neither intelligent nor creative enough to cope with profound spiritual issues. Amid much frenzy, I was charged with promoting socially-unacceptable ideas and browbeating a 19-year-old woman. I lasted just over three weeks.

The incident was interesting on a number of levels, particularly as it yielded some deep insights into the psychology of academic intellectuals with high IQs that is to say, of MENSA types. Sadly, they quickly closed the forum to outsiders in the aftermath of kicking me off and are now hiding behind closed doors. Only registered members can have access and judge for themselves what really went on. However, I have managed to obtain a copy of the incident and can present it here in its entirety.

I have also written an essay which analyses the psychology of the academic intellectual, using the incident at Ne Plus Ultra as a reference point.

- David Quinn

- The Nature of Genius - CHAPTER I

From David Quinn

Sun Dec 14, 2003 1:34 pm:

Hello everyone,

My name is David Quinn and I am a co-founder of Genius Forum. I have no idea what my IQ is, but I am a thinker of timeless wisdom and consider myself to be a sage. A short biographical sketch of me can be found here.

I'm not exactly sure why the Coyote invited me to this forum, considering that my intellect and MO appear to be very different from those used here. I like to make my points in plain English, for example, using simple sentences that are jargon free. Hyper-complex sentence structures littered with puffed-up esoteric terminology leave me cold. I also have no interest in academic thought, especially in regards to philosophy, as I find most of it to be disingenuous, trivial and inane.

So on the face of it, there doesn't seem to be much common ground between us. Already, after a couple of days of perusing this

forum, I regard most of you to be quite, quite mad. And no doubt, in turn, most of you will come to see me as an ignorant simpleton. And so our exchanges will probably peter out after a few days and I will disappear from this place, never to be seen again. If the Coyote was hoping that my presence might add a bit of spark to this forum, he may end up being disappointed.

Anyway, I would like to discuss the nature of genius. To my mind, genius is a property which is intimately linked with consciousness. A genius is someone whose consciousness is of a very high quality. I'm not referring here to the ability to think complicatedly, but rather to its opposite: the ability to think truthfully and simply. A genius possesses the simplicity of someone who has opened his mind to the nature of Reality. He no longer experiences any delusion in his mind and thus no longer has to conjure up complex solutions to imaginary philosophical problems in the way that ordinary academics do. He is able to cut through to the very core of things with ease. This leads to another essential

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

quality of genius, which is independence of thought. Because a genius grounds his every thought in Ultimate Reality, his thinking is completely unaffected by the values, myths, beliefs, and mores of his culture. He is like a child of God, producing every thought from within himself, dwelling far above the confines of human relativism. His every movement is an expression of eternity.

In light of this, I wouldn't call Einstein or Bach or Feynman geniuses. While these men had extraordinary talent, their lack of awareness of the nature of Reality meant that their consciousness was not of a very high quality. They still suffered from gross delusions, which, given their advanced intellects, made them appear very foolish. The best historical examples of genius that I can find are Socrates, Diogenes, Buddha, Lao Tzu, Hakuin, Huang Po, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Weininger.

From Andrew Beckwith

Sun Dec 14, 2003 3:12 pm:

Quote: "In light of this, I wouldn't call Einstein or Bach or Feynman geniuses. While these men had extraordinary talent, their lack of awareness of the nature of Reality meant that their consciousness was not of a very high quality"

You can believe whatever you want. The world thinks differently. I got to know Feynman personally for awhile when he stayed at UCSC for a month and he made a memorable quote which I will give you:

"Scientific genius requires a willingness to suspend disbelief and to play with the fundamental issues with the openness of a young child."

Your willingness to discount the intelligence of others here means you are a closed system. You are therefore missing the boat. Badly.

To whit, Coyote is a full blown member of Pars, arguably one of the most elite IQ societies on the planet. I am a mega foundation member and so are three other people in this forum. But, you know what, no one here went in with a brass horn to announce their psychometric scales to the world.

I write extremely directly, as do others. Stick around and then maybe your opinion would change.

Oh, and while you are at it, here is a working definition of "reality" for you.*

Break out with a new paradigm changing construct and then I will be impressed. Otherwise, [yourself] praise is a sociological [vacuum] state.

From David Quinn

Sun Dec 14, 2003 5:10 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "In light of this, I wouldn't call Einstein or Bach or Feynman geniuses. While these men had extraordinary talent, their lack of awareness of the nature of Reality meant that their consciousness was not of a very high quality."

AB: "You can believe whatever you want. The world thinks differently. I got to know Feynman personally for awhile when he stayed at UCSC for a month and he made a memorable quote which I will give you":

"Scientific genius requires a willingness to suspend disbelief and to play with the fundamental issues with the openness of a young child".

I'm not convinced that Feynman was aware of what a fundamental issue was. He wouldn't have stayed within the limited confines of science if he had been.

Quote: "Your willingness to discount the intelligence of others here means you are a closed system. You are therefore missing the boat. Badly."

I'm not saying that Feynman wasn't intelligent, only that his vision was narrow and not particularly deep. He was essentially a glorified lego-player.

What, in your opinion, was the wisest thing he ever said or did?

Quote: "To whit, Coyote is a full blown member of Pars, arguably one of the most elite IQ societies on the planet. I am a mega

* See here:

<http://www.well.com/user/ddigor/students/kyra_rice/the_fileLiked_to.html>

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

foundation member and so are three other people in this forum. But, you know what, no one here went in with a brass horn to announce their psychometric scales to the world."

You're obviously making up for lost time now!

From Andrew Beckwith

Mon Dec 15, 2003 6:41 am:

Quote: "I'm not saying that Feynman wasn't intelligent, only that his vision was narrow and not particularly deep. He was essentially a glorified lego-player."

"What, in your opinion, was the wisest thing he ever said or did?"

Narrow? This is tommy rot. Feynman created QED and also the Parton model of high energy physics. I am familiar with both. These are paradigm changing achievements of the first magnitude.

Quote: "I'm not convinced that Feynman was aware of what a fundamental issue was. He wouldn't have stayed within the limited confines of science if he had been."

I will be rude here to get your attention. Your very judgemental tone precludes you from having the humility to understand others. You are a closed system. Real science forces people to look outside of themselves. You are incapable of doing that.

Quote:

AB: "To whit, Coyote is a full blown member of Pars, arguably one of the most elite IQ societies on the planet. I am a mega foundation member and so are three other people in this forum. But, you know what, no one here went in with a brass horn to announce their psychometric scales to the world."

DQ: "You're obviously making up for lost time now!"

Can you read? I think not. I said this with an eye toward telling your mightiness that there are a LOT of bright people here. I am the least intelligent of the so called cognitive elite which resides here. Others are more distinguished than I am. But still you are dreaming if you think you are unique. Relax. You are not.

From David Quinn

Mon Dec 15, 2003 11:32 am:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "I'm not saying that Feynman wasn't intelligent, only that his vision was narrow and not particularly deep. He was essentially a glorified lego-player."

AB: "Narrow ? This is tommy rot. Feynman created QED and also the Parton model of high energy physics. I am familiar with both. These are paradigm changing achievements of the first magnitude."

Aquinas used to do groundbreaking work in the field of theology. It used to impress his fellow theologians, and no doubt it required a considerable amount of intelligence to carry it out, but in the larger scheme of things, looked at from the perspective of a great philosopher, it is nothing.

What, in your opinion, was the wisest thing Feynman ever said or did?

Quote:

DQ: "I'm not convinced that Feynman was aware of what a fundamental issue was. He wouldn't have stayed within the limited confines of science if he had been."

AB: "I will be rude here to get your attention. Your very judgemental tone precludes you from having the humility to understand others. You are a closed system. Real science forces people to look outside of themselves. You are incapable of doing that."

You're not being open to the point I am making.

From Andrew Beckwith

Mon Dec 15, 2003 12:03 pm:

You are a theologian, and I am a scientist who has connections with the CTMU philosophy from a deist stand point but who has no interest in a personal God. You rate religious insight over science, and I call them co equal.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Feynmans main contribution. QED. Read it in a link [HERE](#).*

"Amazon.com: Books: QED and the Men Who Made It ... LA. This is a very technical and historical review of the creation of the 20th Centuries most accurate of all physics, QED. "

If you are not impressed, then *go to a nursery*, to paraphrase Shakespeare.

The hell with Saint Thomas Aquinas. I consider NEW theology and NEW areas of knowledge. And I am already tired of this topic.

From David Quinn

Mon Dec 15, 2003 3:43 pm:

I actually rate philosophical reasoning and logical truth above both religious insight and science. Neither religious insight nor scientific theorizing can yield knowledge of ultimate truth, which is the most important knowledge of all. They are both trapped in the realm of uncertainty - science because of its provisional nature, and religion because of its reliance on blind faith.

No one becomes a genius until they go beyond both religion and science.

From Andrew Beckwith

Mon Dec 15, 2003 5:38 pm:

Science is trapped in uncertainty? So what! Prove to me that matters! PROVE IT.

From David Quinn

Mon Dec 15, 2003 7:11 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:
Quote:

"Science is trapped in uncertainty ? So what ! Prove to me that matters ! PROVE IT."

It matters to anyone who values the absolute certainty of ultimate knowledge.

Quote:

"The hell with Saint Thomas Aquinas. I consider NEW theology and NEW areas of knowledge. And I am already tired of this topic."

It won't be long before Feynman's theory of QED is old hat, just like Aquinas's quaint speculations.

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Dec 16, 2003 6:17 am:

The only certainty people have in their lives is eventual death. Get over it.

From David Quinn

Tue Dec 16, 2003 11:07 am:

Our deaths are no certainty. Science could, in the next decade or two, discover the key to physical immortality through their work in genetics. The possibility currently seems remote, but it can't be dismissed altogether. It's also possible that our consciousness (which is essentially what we call "life") will survive the death of our bodies in some way. Again, the possibility seems remote, but it still exists nonetheless.

Death is an empirical event that we presume will occur in the future; this alone makes it inherently uncertain.

From M

Tue Dec 16, 2003 12:01 pm:

David Quinn wrote:

"It matters to anyone who values the absolute certainty of ultimate knowledge."

David, how do you define "ultimate knowledge" in this context?

Back to your first post, you call yourself "a thinker of timeless wisdom." What do "timeless" and "wisdom" mean in this expression? Perhaps you didn't intend us to take this literally, but, if not, could you explain what you did intend?

Would you consider Ghandi a genius? What of Jesus or Buddha? Your description of genius lends itself to an overwhelming number of disparate interpretations, so it's

* See here:

<<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0691033277/103-2909718-3284664?v=glance>>

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

pointless to attempt a simple one, but one interpretation seems solid: you define a genius as someone you aspire to be or think you are becoming. True? If true, then isn't it true that most people have the given ability to become geniuses by choosing to search for and abide by this wisdom you seek? And if that's true, then what's the point of calling someone a genius?

From David Quinn

Tue Dec 16, 2003 3:04 pm:

"M" wrote:
Quote:

DQ: "It matters to anyone who values the absolute certainty of ultimate knowledge."

M: "David, how do you define 'ultimate knowledge' in this context?"

Knowledge that cannot be overturned in any way, either by empirical evidence or logical reasoning, and is therefore true in all possible worlds. This contrasts with the relativistic and/or provisional truths of science.

A simple example is the Buddhist truth that "nothing inherently exists". This is ultimately true because a thing necessarily depends on other things for its existence. A shadow, for example, depends on light, physical objects capable of casting a shadow, a surface capable of receiving a shadow, etc. Take any of these things away and the shadow disappears. Its existence is dependent upon the existence of these other things. It doesn't *inherently* exist.

The same principle applies to everything else in Nature; there can never be an instance in which the assertion "nothing inherently exist" is not true. It is part and parcel of the very nature of existence.

Quote:

"Back to your first post, you call yourself 'a thinker of timeless wisdom.' What do "timeless" and "wisdom" mean in this expression? Perhaps you didn't intend us to take this literally, but, if not, could you explain what you did intend?"

Timeless - not subject to time.

Wisdom - consciousness of Ultimate Reality.

"A thinker of timeless wisdom" thus means a person who generates thoughts out of a consciousness of Ultimate Reality which never changes.

Quote:

"Would you consider Ghandi a genius?"

No. He might have been an extraordinary social reformer, but he had no awareness of Ultimate Reality as far as I can see. I also found his preoccupations rather narcissistic and perverted - e.g. sleeping with virgins (in a non-sexual sense) to "test" his attachment to celibacy.

What about you? What is your conception of genius?

Quote:

"What of Jesus or Buddha?"

If I filter out most of the drivel surrounding the legends of these two men, then yes, I can conceive of them as geniuses. For example, to my mind, about 20% of the Gospels is breathtakingly wise and smacks of true genius, while the rest is forgettable herd-speak. It's almost as though there are two very different Jesus's contained in the Gospels.

Quote:

"Your description of genius lends itself to an overwhelming number of disparate interpretations, so it's pointless to attempt a simple one, but one interpretation seems solid: you define a genius as someone you aspire to be or think you are becoming. True? If true, then isn't it true that most people have the given ability to become geniuses by choosing to search for and abide by this wisdom you seek? And if that's true, then what's the point of calling someone a genius?"

Do you believe that genius is only a valid quality if one is simply born with it?

From my perspective, genius is as much a trait of character and decision-making, as it is of raw intellect. Some people are born with very high IQs and razzle-dazzle intellects, but because of character flaws - e.g. they might

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

be cowardly or overly-timid, or they might be full of anger and revenge from a lifetime of being taunted at school for being a nerd, or they might be preoccupied with seeking fame and admiration within the intellectual community, etc - they misapply their intellects in unintelligent ways and don't mentally develop into geniuses.

Genius is a mental quality which is activated when the intellect is consistently applied in wise ways. By this definition, Stephen Hawking isn't a genius, even though he has a highly-active intellect. He might have been born with some of the raw material for genius - namely, a high IQ - but it wasn't enough. He didn't have the passion for ultimate understanding and the ability to think profoundly, which is just as important for the development of genius as raw intellect is.

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Dec 16, 2003 4:00 pm:

David Quinn wrote:

"Our deaths are no certainty. Science could, in the next decade or two, discover the key to physical immortality through their work in genetics."

I would not mind living to be 100 years old, but then I WANT to die. I actually am after I have been here long enough eager to see what lies ahead. Spare me analogies with the Christian God, please. This has nothing to do with religion.

I cannot imagine living for a thousand years. God it would be so damn BORING.

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Dec 16, 2003 4:04 pm:

Quote:

"Knowledge that cannot be overturned in any way, either by empirical evidence or logical reasoning, and is therefore true in all possible worlds. This contrasts with the relativistic and/or provisional truths of science."

Do you realize that you just made a perfect description of a living hell on earth by what you just wrote? Knowledge which cannot be

challenged? What fun is there in that? None at all. I like being able to kick a can around and to tinker with it.

And, what you THINK you know about Buddhist Nirvana is way off the mark. Just letting you know.

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Dec 16, 2003 4:05 pm:

Quote: "And if that's true, then what's the point of calling someone a genius?"

None. Robbie he wants a closed system of thinking which has no input from the real world.

From David Quinn

Tue Dec 16, 2003 4:58 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

"Do you realize that you just made a perfect description of a living hell on earth by what you just wrote? Knowledge which cannot be challenged?"

Ultimate knowledge can indeed be challenged - in the form of trying to rationally refute it. It's just that it continually passes the test.

Quote:

"What fun is there in that? None at all. I like being able to kick a can around and to tinker with it."

Don't worry, I'm not trying to take away your precious scientific theorizing. Rather, I'm arguing for a greater form of rationality which is at home with both the uncertainties of science and the certainties of philosophy. There is plenty of room in the world for both.

Part of being a clear-minded thinker is knowing how to distinguish between what is certain in life and what isn't. There's no need to be scared of philosophic certainty; it doesn't negate the open-endedness of science.

Quote:

"And, what you THINK you know about Buddhist Nirvana is way off the mark."

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

In what way?

Quote: "I cannot imagine living for a thousand years. God it would be so damn BORING."

I would love to live for a thousand years and beyond. So tell me, which one of us is really creating a living hell on earth?

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Dec 16, 2003 5:27 pm:

Something tells me that you have never, never, never tried scientific inquiry. If you had, you would not be so certain about your creed. Inquiry in its highest state mandates receptivity to flashes of insight which are almost a religious experience in intensity.

I wish you had this experience. Since you have not, I realize that my discussion of what you are lacking is like trying to make you drink water when you wish to be parching yourself into a near comatose state while you wander in the desert of your search for absolute certainty. What a shame.

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Dec 16, 2003 5:31 pm:

Quote: "I would love to live for a thousand years and beyond. So tell me, which one of us is really creating a living hell on earth?"

First, why live a thousand years? What fun is there in that? I do not believe that we are bound to our here and now for our ultimate fate. Why delay ad infinitum a natural process?

Me creating a living hell on earth? This is asinine. Please tell me how anything I am talking about is a hell on earth experience.

From M

Tue Dec 16, 2003 11:48 pm:

David Quinn wrote:

"A simple example is the Buddhist truth that 'nothing inherently exists'. This is ultimately true because a thing necessarily depends on other things for its existence....It doesn't *inherently* exist."

Existence isn't a predicate (of itself) and is presupposed in hypothesizing all possible

worlds. In other words, in all possible worlds, all possible worlds exist, so existence is necessary in all possible worlds.

David Quinn wrote:

"The same principle applies to everything else in Nature; there can never be an instance in which the assertion "nothing inherently exist" is not true. It is part and parcel of the very nature of existence."

Let's assume that existence is a predicate (of that which enables existence and thus doesn't necessarily exist). You're effectively declaring that contingent existence must be necessary to itself by nature. Or, it is the nature of existence to be necessarily contingent. The obvious problem here is that a necessary predicate, or a predicate that always accompanies a concept, cannot be true only under certain conditions or it would not always accompany that concept. Contingency and necessity are polar opposites; think about it

David Quinn wrote:

"Timeless - not subject to time.

"Wisdom - consciousness of Ultimate Reality."

We have no experience of anything that occurs outside spacetime, so how can we be sure that something timeless exists or, if so, what it means to be timeless?

What does "Ultimate Reality" mean???

David Quinn wrote:

"I also found his preoccupations rather narcissistic and perverted - e.g. sleeping with virgins (in a non-sexual sense) to "test" his attachment to celibacy."

That's funny. This sounds like typical Buddhist behavior and, for all of Buddhism's and Ghandi's positive qualities, I find this preoccupation ridiculously naive.

David Quinn wrote:

"What about you? What is your conception of genius?"

Genius is a useful motivator but a tad trite nowadays. I prefer not to discuss it and let the masses tear it to triviality.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

David Quinn wrote:

"For example, to my mind, about 20% of the Gospels is breathtakingly wise and smacks of true genius, while the rest is forgettable herd-speak. It's almost as though there are two very different Jesus's contained in the Gospels."

Hmm. I would say more but I unfortunately can't think about the Bible without wincing.

David Quinn wrote:

"Genius is a mental quality which is activated when the intellect is consistently applied in wise ways."

No offense but we're right back to that amorphous concept of "timeless wisdom." Please elaborate.

I often find truth between meaning.

Then I find that truth between meaning is meaningless.

Then I find a cloud of confusion rising to suffocate me.

Then I run away from it and find truth again.

After about 15 minutes of this shit, I throw up and wish I were dead.

But then I realize that I would find truth after I die,

which doesn't make any damn sense so must be true...

From David Quinn

Wed Dec 17, 2003 1:59 am:

M wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "A simple example is the Buddhist truth that 'nothing inherently exists'. This is ultimately true because a thing necessarily depends on other things for its existence....It doesn't inherently exist."

M: "Existence isn't a predicate (of itself) and is presupposed in hypothesizing all possible worlds. In other words, in all possible worlds, all possible worlds exist, so existence is necessary in all possible worlds."

Contingent existence, yes.

Quote:

DQ: "The same principle applies to everything else in Nature; there can never be an instance in which the assertion 'nothing inherently exist' is not true. It is part and parcel of the very nature of existence."

M: "Let's assume that existence is a predicate (of that which enables existence and thus doesn't necessarily exist). You're effectively declaring that contingent existence must be necessary to itself by nature. Or, it is the nature of existence to be necessarily contingent."

The latter, yes.

Quote: "The obvious problem here is that a necessary predicate, or a predicate that always accompanies a concept, cannot be true only under certain conditions or it would not always accompany that concept. Contingency and necessity are polar opposites; think about it."

True, an assertion that is only true in certain circumstances cannot be classed as a necessary truth (which is true in all circumstances). But this has no bearing on the point I was making - which is that whenever or wherever something exists, its existence is necessarily contingent. That is to say, a thing can never have a non-contingent form of existence under any circumstances.

Quote: "We have no experience of anything that occurs outside spacetime, so how can we be sure that something timeless exists or, if so, what it means to be timeless?"

Logical/definitional truths are timeless in the sense that they can never be falsified. For example, 1+1 will always equal 2, given the way we currently define these terms. It is not something that will become false over time.

Quote: "What does 'Ultimate Reality' mean???"

Nature as it really is, as opposed to what deluded people falsely imagine it to be.

Quote:

DQ: "What about you? What is your conception of genius?"

M: "Genius is a useful motivator but a tad trite nowadays. I prefer not to discuss it and let the masses tear it to triviality."

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

These two sentences don't seem to go together. Do you value genius or not?

Quote:

DQ: "For example, to my mind, about 20% of the Gospels is breathtakingly wise and smacks of true genius, while the rest is forgettable herd-speak. It's almost as though there are two very different Jesus's contained in the Gospels."

M: "Hmm. I would say more but I unfortunately can't think about the Bible without wincing."

It would be a shame to let that sort of emotional reaction to influence and limit your perspective on things. Foolish, really.

From David Quinn

Wed Dec 17, 2003 2:03 am:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote: "Me creating a living hell on earth? This is asinine. Please tell me how anything I am talking about is a hell on earth experience."

Because you're suicidal in your outlook.

CHAPTER II

From Andrew Beckwith

Wed Dec 17, 2003 7:34 am:

Garbage. I believe that biology allowed me a certain path. This shows you are seriously deficient in critical moral comprehension of why human beings are constructed as they are. Death and dying are as necessary to human evolution as birth itself.

I said I would not mind living a century, and I mean it. By ANY objective standards of human rationality this shows how asinine your statement of me being suicidal is. And, I will repeat what I also said too. You know NOTHING about Buddhist teachings. Buddhist teachings specifically enjoins a seeker of Nirvana to escape the cycle of rebirth. Life is held to be SUFFERING which a person has to work off via dealing with Karma issues. Staying physically alive for a thousand years would contravene the search for Nirvana big time.

And, when I said I would actually look forward to death after a LONG life that is merely me saying that I am looking forward to my evolution from a corporeal existence to the next level. This is not suicidal thinking. That you equate it with suicide is ridiculous.

I hope you realize that you shot yourself in the foot. Thanks for playing, bub. You made my day.

Gday,

Andrew Beckwith, PhD

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

"You know NOTHING about Buddhist teachings. Buddhist teachings specifically enjoins a seeker of Nirvana to escape the cycle of rebirth. Life is held to be SUFFERING which a person has to work off via dealing with Karma issues. Staying physically alive for a thousand years would contravene the search for Nirvana big time."

There is no law which states, either in the Buddhist teachings or in Nature Herself, that we are condemned to live for no more than a 100 years or so. Even if we lived for a millions years, we still wouldn't be contravening the cycle of life and death. It would just be a longer cycle, that's all.

Quote:

"Staying physically alive for a thousand years would contravene the search for Nirvana big time."

Granted, most people would only become even more entrenched in their delusions in that span of time.

In my view, if a person hasn't reached nirvana (i.e. realized Ultimate Reality) by the time they are thirty, they probably never will. After 30, the brain's pathways start to become too deeply-etched and hardened, such that it becomes very difficult to initiate fundamental change.

From David Quinn

Wed Dec 17, 2003 12:35 pm:

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Quote: And, when I said I would actually look forward to death after a LONG life that is merely me saying that I am looking forward to my evolution from a corporeal existence to the next level. This is not suicidal thinking. That you equate it with suicide is ridiculous.

Relax, I was just teasing you. You did seem to suggest that even if you had the chance to live beyond a thousand years, you would prefer to die because you would find life too unbearable (via boredom). It's no big leap to equate this with a suicidal outlook. Perhaps there are issues inside you that you're not properly addressing ...

From Dan Rowden

Thu Dec 25, 2003 2:10 am:

Andrew Beckwith wrote to David Quinn:
Quote:

"And, I will repeat what I also said too. You know NOTHING about Buddhist teachings. Buddhist teachings specifically enjoins a seeker of Nirvana to escape the cycle of rebirth. Life is held to be SUFFERING which a person has to work off via dealing with Karma issues. Staying physically alive for a thousand years would contravene the search for Nirvana big time."

I have to say I find it entirely remarkable that you could say this and yet accuse someone else of knowing nothing about Buddhism. The physical duration of a person's life has *nothing whatsoever* to do with the search for Nirvana.

Dan Rowden

From Andrew Beckwith

Thu Dec 25, 2003 4:50 am:

Quote:

"The physical duration of a person's life has nothing whatsoever to do with the search for Nirvana."

Deliberately tampering with mother nature so as to avoid the normal birth-death cycle has EVERYTHING to do with Nirvana. Think it over, please.

From David Quinn

Fri Dec 26, 2003 8:32 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:
Quote:

"Deliberately tampering with mother nature so as to avoid the normal birth-death cycle has EVERYTHING to do with Nirvana. Think it over, please."

I don't see the connection either. Care to elaborate?

What about the use of medicines to ward off diseases and prolong life? Does a person who visits the hospital to overcome a life-threatening illness automatically cut himself off from Nirvana?

The life expectancy for Weterners has almost doubled over the past century - does this mean that we're all spiritually doomed?

From Kitten

Fri Dec 26, 2003 9:20 pm:

Allow me to quickly jump in here, despite the fact I have not read the entire board I have read the last few posts. As a theologian by choice, I think that one's life span does not have an effect on reaching Nirvana. Reason would be for several factors, one being that many practicing monks recognize life to be a gift, not a burden. Although samsara is seen as being a horrible trapped and locked existence, it is life which allows one to recognize the cycle and the ability to break it. Not only this but it seems you two are arguing from a Hindu/Buddhist perspective rather than a fully Mahayana or Theravada Buddhist point of view. Looking at it in this way a life span does not matter as the idea is to reach Nirvana: once Nirvana is attained life is meaningless and one passes from this world to the next once ready, whenever that is, for whatever reason (one example being Siddhartha's reason for staying: teaching).

Being alive for say one thousand years would not hamper reaching Nirvana, it would simply imply you never reached it, or were not ready to leave this world. The idea that a person may, over this time frame, become impeded in the search for Nirvana is true, but this would be so for a person unfamiliar

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

entirely with the practice and beliefs held by a Buddhist or Hindu. If a person had no idea of the eight-fold path, nor the fact that material possessions bind you to this existence, they would surely become more ensnared by their Western lifestyle. In this light a person who knew of the teachings, and indeed of the cycle of samsara, would not be impeded by a longer life span at all, as they would be here out of necessity or choice.

From analog57

Fri Dec 26, 2003 9:50 pm:

David Quinn wrote:

"In my view, if a person hasn't reached nirvana (i.e. realized Ultimate Reality) by the time they are thirty, they probably never will. After 30, the brain's pathways start to become too deeply-etched and hardened, such that it becomes very difficult to initiate fundamental change."

Interesting... Some people here[myself included] appear to have a type of stunted emotional growth, and I suspect that the neural pathways for such people have more plasticity than the average "emotionally mature" brain?

New neural connections CAN be generated... Old dogs with young brains?

From David Quinn

Sat Dec 27, 2003 4:29 pm

analog57 wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "In my view, if a person hasn't reached nirvana (i.e. realized Ultimate Reality) by the time they are thirty, they probably never will. After 30, the brain's pathways start to become too deeply-etched and hardened, such that it becomes very difficult to initiate fundamental change."

An57: "Interesting... Some people here[myself included] appear to have a type of stunted emotional growth, and I suspect that the neural pathways for such people have more plasticity than the average 'emotionally mature' brain?"

I assume you're reasoning that people who stunt their emotional growth - either through habitually suppressing their emotional needs, or simply because they have never had any interest in emotional/feminine issues - free up their brains for intellectual pursuit, which makes their minds more imaginative and flexible and thus more open to the possibilities of wisdom ...?

While this sounds okay in theory, in my experience nerdy people with high IQs tend to clog up their neuronal pathways with thousands of useless facts and over-complicated, trivial theories to such an extent such that their minds rapidly lose their flexibility and sensitivity to Reality. They generally also seem to be quite timid people and too afraid to pursue line of thought that are dangerous and unconventional. As a result of these things, they are usually no more open to the possibility of becoming enlightened than the average "emotionally mature" person.

Quote:

"New neural connections CAN be generated... Old dogs with young brains?"

Sure, but it still becomes more difficult as you get older. You can't bend a fully-grown tree too much. It will just snap.

From David Quinn

Sat Dec 27, 2003 4:57 pm:

Kitten wrote:

Quote:

"Being alive for say one thousand years would not hamper reaching Nirvana, it would simply imply you never reached it, or were not ready to leave this world."

Are you imagining that when a person realizes nirvana he instantly disappears into thin air or gets beamed up into another world? It doesn't happen like that. That's fairy-tales. Realizing nirvana is simply perceiving and experiencing Nature without delusion, which means that the enlightened person continues to live on as a human being until he dies, just like everyone else. One of the reasons why I would love to live a thousand years or more is that, apart from wanting to see how society evolves and develops as the years go by, it

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

would mean spending many hundreds of years enjoying nirvana.

Quote:

"The idea that a person may, over this time frame, become impeded in the search for Nirvana is true, but this would be so for a person unfamiliar entirely with the practice and beliefs held by a Buddhist or Hindu."

You don't have to be a Buddhist or a Hinduist to experience nirvana. In fact, I haven't yet met *anyone* from those religions who has any real idea what nirvana means. The most important spiritual practice of all is to think hard about the nature of Reality. Nothing else really matters. This is far superior to following the eightfold path of Buddhism or a set of Hindu rituals.

From analog57

Sat Dec 27, 2003 6:05 pm:

David Quinn wrote:

"I assume you're reasoning that people who stunt their emotional growth - either through habitually suppressing their emotional needs, or simply because they have never had any interest in emotional/feminine issues - free up their brains for intellectual pursuit, which makes their minds more imaginative and flexible and thus more open to the possibilities of wisdom ...?"

"While this sounds okay in theory, in my experience nerdish people with high IQs tend to clog up their neuronal pathways with thousands of useless facts and over-complicated, trivial theories to such an extent such that their minds rapidly lose their flexibility and sensitivity to Reality."

Interesting... that type of emotional growth is not exactly what I was talking about, but beggars can't be choosers eh?

Your experience appears to be limited? ...Nerds? ...What is the ultimate truth? ...rocking chair philosophy? Can you define ..."Truth"?

"I THINK THEREFORE I EXIST"
TRUTH?

Or a daemon could be feeding my brain with an illusion?

[Whatever] the case may be, there is a level where "the buck stops"...?

According to Berkeley, perception is consistent due to the fact that a type of mental universal self consistency must apply to the collective whole of individual perceptions. A type of universal being? A type of superior intelligence[BEING] creates a world by the sheer power of thought, in which every object becomes, for the percipient, the collected results of many perceptions, or bits of information. That is to say, sensory objects are compositions derived from many perceptual experiences over a period of time, originating from a universal compositional entity, or "BEING". These perceptions are impressed upon each individual mind with order and consistency. Since this universal "Self Awareness" must sustain Creation at all times, everything is always perceived by this self referring, self referential entity, ergo, total reality continues "to exist", even though it may cease to be experienced by any individual self aware perceiver

Your rather quaint dismissal of people with hi IQs as being "nerds" is a very weak argument at best. At worst, it displays your sheer ignorance of the subject matter, that you claim to "know"...?

Quote:

Analogue: "New neural connections CAN be generated... Old dogs with young brains?"

DQ: "Sure, but it still becomes more difficult as you get older. You can't bend a fully-grown tree too much. It will just snap."

Good analogy, there are exceptions though, rare as they may be...

From David Quinn

Sat Dec 27, 2003 7:21 pm:

analog57 wrote:

Quote:

"Can you define ... 'Truth'?"

A truth (small t) is any conclusion that cannot be falsified by either reason or empiri-

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

cal evidence. Truth (capital t) is the truth about the nature of existence. I sometimes call it "Ultimate Truth" in order to highlight the fact that it is the truth about what is ultimate in Nature.

Quote:

"I THINK THEREFORE I EXIST"

"TRUTH?"

"Or a daemon could be feeding my brain with an illusion?"

It depends on exactly what is meant by the phrase. It is open to several interpretations. What do you mean by it?

Quote:

"According to Berkeley, perception is consistent due to the fact that a type of mental universal self consistency must apply to the collective whole of individual perceptions. A type of universal being? A type of superior intelligence [BEING] creates a world by the sheer power of thought, in which every object becomes, for the percipient, the collected results of many perceptions, or bits of information. That is to say, sensory objects are compositions derived from many perceptual experiences over a period of time, originating from a universal compositional entity, or 'BEING'. These perceptions are impressed upon each individual mind with order and consistency. Since this universal 'Self Awareness' must sustain Creation at all times, everything is always perceived by this self referring, self referential entity, ergo, total reality continues 'to exist', even though it may cease to be experienced by any individual self aware perceiver..."

Is this what you believe?

Quote:

"Your rather quaint dismissal of people with hi IQs as being 'nerds' is a very weak argument at best. At worst, it displays your sheer ignorance of the subject matter, that you claim to 'know'..."

I didn't know I was engaging in an argument. I was simply responding to your description of some people on this forum (some

of whom describe themselves as "mega-geniuses") having stunted emotional growth. That this conjures up the image of the nerd is only natural.

So what were you thinking of, then?

From analog57

Sat Dec 27, 2003 8:17 pm:

Analogue: "Can you define ... 'Truth'?"

DQ: "A truth (small t) is any conclusion that cannot be falsified by either reason or empirical evidence. Truth (capital t) is the truth about the nature of existence. I sometimes call it 'Ultimate Truth' in order to highlight the fact that it is the truth about what is ultimate in Nature."

Sounds good, so, what is this ..."ultimate truth", in your humble opinion?

Or are you giving a general definition without identifying THE SINGULAR ULTIMATE TRUTH OF EXISTENCE?

Analogue: "I THINK THEREFORE I EXIST"

"TRUTH?"

"Or a daemon could be feeding my brain with an illusion?"

DQ: "It depends on exactly what is meant by the phrase. It is open to several interpretations. What do you mean by it?"

Are you saying that we could choose what is truth?

To make a choice, is to make a distinction YES/NO

That choice is a type of "absolute" truth. At any one moment we are either consciously or subconsciously making choices.

Reality Exists

T or F?

Analogue: "According to Berkeley, perception is consistent due to the fact that a type of mental universal self consistency must apply to the collective whole of individual perceptions. A type of universal being? A type of superior intelligence [BEING] creates a world by the sheer power of thought, in which every object becomes, for the percipient, the collected results of many perceptions, or bits of information. That is to say, sensory objects

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

are compositions derived from many perceptual experiences over a period of time, originating from a universal compositional entity, or 'BEING'. These perceptions are impressed upon each individual mind with order and consistency. Since this universal 'Self Awareness' must sustain Creation at all times, everything is always perceived by this self referring, self referential entity, ergo, total reality continues 'to exist', even though it may cease to be experienced by any individual self aware perceiver..."

DQ: "Is this what you believe?"

It is a "conjecture"...

Analog: "Your rather quaint dismissal of people with hi IQs as being 'nerds' is a very weak argument at best. At worst, it displays your sheer ignorance of the subject matter, that you claim to 'know'..."

DQ: "I didn't know I was engaging in an argument. I was simply responding to your description of some people on this forum (some of whom describe themselves as "mega-geniuses") having stunted emotional growth. That this conjures up the image of the nerd is only natural."

The "nerd" label seems to display a superficial understanding?

Quote: "So what were you thinking of, then?"

It is similar to starvation, but the intellect is what is starving...

From Kitten

Sat Dec 27, 2003 8:22 pm:

I certainly do not believe people disappear into thin air once Nirvana is attained David! *laughs* You said that "realizing nirvana is simply perceiving and experiencing Nature without delusion, which means that the enlightened person continues to live on as a human being until he dies, just like everyone else." Yes, this is true to the letter, and I never disagreed with this. Who said that living to the extent of your natural life is not the same as leaving this world and passing on next because you are ready?

I define nirvana as the final emancipation of the soul from transmigration, and consequently a virtuous enfranchisement from the evils of worldly existence, as by annihilation or absorption (this word being emphasized) into the divine. If one takes the more general definition, as you seem to be doing, to be the ineffable ultimate in which one has achieved impartial wisdom and compassion or the emancipation from ignorance and the extinction of all attachment then I can see what you are saying. This was the point I was attempting to communicate, but failed in doing so—most probably due to the effects of my insomnia.

I also agree that one need not be a Buddhist or Hindu to enjoy Nirvana, although what I meant was they probably would not refer to it as such, or have the same description, or full comprehension, of this ecstasy then someone who did have full knowledge of it from such a religion. You also said "The most important spiritual practice of all is to think hard about the nature of Reality. Nothing else really matters." Which I do disagree with as I feel that questioning the self is just as important as questioning the reality you are surrounded by (taking into account nature and other beings you come into contact here).

The idea that has been brought forward of Berkley, to which I must quip this is one of the reasons I still have problems finding true reality, or a Universal Truth about it, if there is such a thing. Mainly I have been diagnosed, among other things, as possibly having MPD. This in itself throws many things into question, not to mention the hallucinations I have had of people whom, as far as I could tell, were real: I could touch them, converse normally, smell them, and they had distinct personalities and traits. Thus, I can say with sincerity that "these perceptions are impressed upon each individual mind with order and consistency," and that it certainly brings into question whether there is a "self referential entity," or not.

David, you have said in your last message: "I didn't know I was engaging in an argument. I was simply responding to your description of some people on this forum (some of whom describe themselves as "mega-geniuses") having stunted emotional growth." Two things: I've come to accept that people on this site tend to take things a little too

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

personally sometimes, simply because these are passionate people who love their values. And secondly...I hope I'm not one of those people...

From Plato

Sat Dec 27, 2003 10:29 pm:

David, rigorous scientific thought is the only path to truth that has been given to man because it is the only path that is consistent with the nature of cognition. In this, I do not separate philosophy from science, or rational inquiry from scientific inquiry - these are all part of scientific synthesis. The most pertinent and valuable object of philosophy is to develop a scientific method consistent with the nature of cognition that can be used by cognition to obtain a thought-image of reality. The ultimate goal that we strive towards is to attain a thought-image of reality that is perfect in all respects. Perfect knowledge is impossible, for otherwise one would become equal with God; knowledge can, however, be perfected. All of this does not mean, Dr. Beckwith, that we should get emotional about this issue, and proceed to calmly address David's many insightful comments.

It seems to me that your greatest mistake, David, is claiming that science can only grant access to provisional truths. You state that:

Quote:

"A simple example is the Buddhist truth that 'nothing inherently exists'. This is ultimately true because a thing necessarily depends on other things for its existence. A shadow, for example, depends on light, physical objects capable of casting a shadow, a surface capable of receiving a shadow, etc. Take any of these things away and the shadow disappears. Its existence is dependent upon the existence of these other things. It doesn't inherently exist. The same principle applies to everything else in Nature..."

That which exists i.e. that which comprises reality is a set of universal physical principles of which everything else is a causal derivative. For example, the efficient existence of gravitation is not dependent on the presence of mass-objects; the efficient existence of least time is not dependent on the presence of

light rays. Thus, universal physical principles, or final causes, exist absolutely. Furthermore, they are timeless, since all other existence is contingent on their existence. For example, the principle of negentropic growth which defines living organisms has always existed, even though living organisms have not; cognition has always existed, even though man has not, and so on. Since these exist absolutely and eternally, their existence cannot be refuted by any means, empirical or rational and therefore knowledge of universal physical principles submits to your criterion of "ultimate truth". Now, David, a well-developed scientific method, akin to that elaborated by Plato and subsequent Platonic thinkers, allows one to obtain knowledge of universal physical principles by means of Socratic hypothesizing.

At this moment we know of N universal physical principles. All other provisional knowledge which science deals with can be traced back to the knowledge of those principles. Most scientists are simply not aware of this fact because they are not taught to regard processes from a rigorous principled standpoint. This is not a problem with science, this is a problem with scientific education, and thus your assault on fundamentals of scientific inquiry is misplaced. Science is not based on empirical or rational inquiry alone, although these are subsumed in science. Science is based on the human ability to hypothesize, which transcends logic and sense-perception. Further points of clarification are required, albeit of secondary importance:

Quote:

"Logical/definitional truths are timeless in the sense that they can never be falsified. For example, 1+1 will always equal 2, given the way we currently define these terms. It is not something that will become false over time."

There is no such thing as a self-evident truth that is divorced from knowledge of universal physical principles. It's, as you say, a fairy tale. Definitional truths have no a priori truth content, as one can create formal systems which are internally consistent, yet inconsistent with reality. Inasmuch as truth-content can be ascribed to them is if their

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

formulation is made axiomatically consistent with the underlying physical reality. Take the development of calculus or the idea of a complex number. Neither can be deduced from an earlier formal system. $\sqrt{-1}$ exists as a solution to algebraic equations, but in and out of itself it is meaningless because it does not have any physical significance. Similarly, $1+1 = 2$ is meaningless until you develop a notion of number. I urge you to read some posts in the "Maths" section and kindly partake in our humble discussion. You may find it quite, shall I say, "enlightening".

Best wishes,
Sergei

From David Quinn

Sun Dec 28, 2003 2:55 pm:

Sergei wrote:
Quote:

"David, unfortunately you may have found yourself in the wrong place on this forum, as most of us here hold that rigorous scientific thought is the only path to truth that has been given to us. In this, we do not separate philosophy from science, or rational inquiry from scientific inquiry - these are all part of scientific synthesis."

How have you established that the scientific method is the only valid path to truth? I'm sure if you analyze it you will see that it could not have been done through the scientific method itself, for obvious reasons, which means that you would have had to have used philosophic logic. This alone shows that when it comes to *fundamental* issues, philosophic logic constitutes a higher court of appeal than the scientific method.

I should also point out that the practice of philosophic logic - the "philosophic method", if you will - is very similar to the scientific method in many ways. It too involves an open-ended process of testing assertions and discarding those which don't stand up. Where it differs from the scientific method is that the theories and assertions it tests are logical in nature, as opposed to being empirical, and the evidence used to test them is again logical in nature, as opposed to being empirical.

Quote:

"The most pertinent and valuable object of philosophy is to develop a scientific method consistent with the nature of cognition what can be used by cognition to obtain a thought-image of reality. The ultimate goal that we strive towards is to attain a thought-image of reality that is perfect in all respects."

In my view, this represents a bastardization of philosophy. While it may be the goal of *scientists* to try and create perfect models of reality, it isn't the goal of philosophers - or at least genuine philosophers who are actually interested in understanding reality. I realize that academic philosophers currently stand in awe of science and try to mimic what they do, but in my eyes they have long ago lost the plot. I spit on them. They do not deserve the lofty title of "philosopher".

Philosophy is essentially a destructive process, rather than a creative one. It uses reason to expose and obliterate all forms of irrationality until there is nothing left in the mind but pure pristine Reality in all its naked glory. When the philosopher reaches this point he no longer tries to model Reality in any way, or try to form perfect thought-images of it. Quite the opposite, he abandons that sort of thing entirely and simply perceives the nature of Reality directly, in each moment, without the distorting prism of delusion.

Quote:

"It seems to me that David's greatest mistake is claiming that science can only grant access to provisional truths. He states that:

A simple example is the Buddhist truth that 'nothing inherently exists'. This is ultimately true because a thing necessarily depends on other things for its existence. A shadow, for example, depends on light, physical objects capable of casting a shadow, a surface capable of receiving a shadow, etc. Take any of these things away and the shadow disappears. Its existence is dependent upon the existence of these other things. It doesn't inherently exist. The same principle applies to everything else in Nature

"That which exists i.e. that which comprises reality, is a set of universal physical

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

principles of which everything else is a causal derivative. For example, the efficient existence of gravitation is not dependent on the presence of mass-objects; thus universal physical principles, or final causes, exist absolutely.”

I'm not sure that I follow. How can gravity exist without the presence of mass-objects?

Quote:

“Since these exist absolutely, their existence cannot be refuted by any means, empirical or rational and therefore knowledge of universal physical principles submits to David's criterion of ‘universal truth’.”

We have no way of knowing whether the physical world isn't an illusion or a simulation of some kind. The entire universe, together with its scientific principles and laws, could easily be a virtually-created world, or a dream inside someone's head. This alone makes all scientific theorizing provisional, together with all of its principles and laws. Their reality as "absolute, universal principles" is provisionally dependent upon the perceived world not being a simulation of some kind.

Quote:

DQ: Logical/definitional truths are timeless in the sense that they can never be falsified. For example, $1+1$ will always equal 2, given the way we currently de-

fine these terms. It is not something that will become false over time.

Sergei: Clearly, logical/definitional truths have no bearing on reality, as one can create formal systems which are internally consistent, yet inconsistent with reality. That is why these "truths" have no a priori truth-content.

I come across this view all the time, but it's flawed in a number of ways. Its main flaw is that of equating all categories of logical truth with mathematical truths and/or "formal systems which are internally consistent, yet inconsistent with reality". While there are certainly any number of systems of thought that one could devise which are internally consistent and yet inconsistent with reality, it doesn't mean that *all* logical truths are of this nature. In reality, mathematical truths and "internally consistent/inconsistent with reality" truths constitute only a subset of the entire range of logical truths.

Part of the skill of being a decent philosopher is knowing how to create logical truths that are both internally consistent *and* wholly applicable to reality. A simple example is the truth that all things are finite. By finite, I specifically mean "falling short of constituting the totality of all there is". In other words, a finite thing is bounded; it begins and ends; it doesn't extend indefinitely in all directions to embrace the Totality. It is but the work of a few seconds to see that all things are necessarily finite, and that the logical truth "all things are finite" necessarily applies to reality.

CHAPTER III

From David Quinn

Sun Dec 28, 2003 3:23 pm

Kitten wrote:

Quote:

“The idea that has been brought forward of Berkley, to which I must quip this is one of the reasons I still have problems finding true reality, or a Universal Truth about it, if there is such a thing. Mainly I have been diagnosed, among other things, as possibly having MPD. This in itself throws many things into

question, not to mention the hallucinations I have had of people whom, as far as I could tell, were real: I could touch them, converse normally, smell them, and they had distinct personalities and traits. Thus, I can say with sincerity that “these perceptions are impressed upon each individual mind with order and consistency,” and that it certainly brings into question whether there is a “self referential entity,” or not.”

Although you might have this disorder, everyone is in the same boat, really. None of

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

us can be certain that what we experience in the world, or indeed the world itself, isn't an hallucination of some kind. It doesn't matter what kind of empirical evidence we care to throw together to support the view that we not hallucinating; the evidence itself could easily be part of the hallucination.

Of course, on a practical level, we have no choice but to treat everything we experience as "real", at least until we discover convincing evidence to the contrary. This applies just as much to people with healthy brains as it does with those who suffer MPD and the like. It's part of the "human condition". However, it is possible to transcend this kind of uncertainty through enlightenment.

Part of the joy of becoming enlightened is that the uncertainties which are inherent in the empirical world are no longer important. They still continue to exist, but they no longer have any bearing on one's knowledge and wisdom. This is because the enlightened person sees that *everything* is a manifestation of Ultimate Reality, regardless of whether it is an hallucination or not. Even the dreams inside one's own mind are imbued with just as much Ultimate Reality as the physical mountains and trees outside.

From David Quinn

Sun Dec 28, 2003 3:48 pm

Anlog57 wrote:

Quote:

"Sounds good, so, what is this ...'ultimate truth', in your humble opinion?"

Well, I can give you a bunch of words which probably won't mean anything unless you already have some sort of inkling of what Ultimate Truth might consist of. I could say, "emptiness", for example. Or "formlessness". And I could add to this by saying that it is what is understood and experienced when one perceives the illusory nature of everything. But again, unless you have some sort of idea of what these words might mean, they won't mean anything to you.

Quote:

Analogue: "I THINK THEREFORE I EXIST"

"TRUTH?"

"Or a daemon could be feeding my brain with an illusion?"

DQ: "It depends on exactly what is meant by the phrase. It is open to several interpretations. What do you mean by it?"

Analogue: "Are you saying that we could choose what is truth?"

No, I'm saying that philosophic terms, such as "think", "I" and "exist", can mean any number of things depending on who is employing them.

For example, if the phrase, "I think therefore I exist", is interpreted to mean that the act of thinking is enough to prove that one isn't an hallucination, then obviously that would be false. However, if it is interpreted to mean that the act of thinking proves that consciousness is occurring, experiences are happening and Reality is not nothing whatsoever, then that is a truth which not even a daemon can cast doubt upon.

Quote:

"Reality Exists."

"T or F?"

Neither.

Quote:

Analogue: "According to Berkeley, perception is consistent due to the fact that a type of mental universal self consistency must apply to the collective whole of individual perceptions. A type of universal being? A type of superior intelligence [BEING] creates a world by the sheer power of thought, in which every object becomes, for the percipient, the collected results of many perceptions, or bits of information. That is to say, sensory objects are compositions derived from many perceptual experiences over a period of time, originating from a universal compositional entity, or 'BEING'. These perceptions are impressed upon each individual mind with order and consistency. Since this universal 'Self Awareness' must sustain Creation at all times, everything is always perceived by this self referring, self referential entity, ergo, total reality continues 'to exist', even though it may

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

cease to be experienced by any individual self aware perceiver."

DQ: "Is this what you believe?"

Analog: "It is a 'conjecture'."

And what's the point of it?

From Andrew Beckwith

Sun Dec 28, 2003 4:49 pm:

Quote:

"How have you established that the scientific method is the only valid path to truth?"

It is the most honest one we currently have for phenomenological events. If you wish to separate yourself from a causal linkage to phenomenology you can come up with all sorts of conjectures. Doing so puts you on the side of those who enforced dogma as a way to silence those who were socially inconvenient.

From analog57

Sun Dec 28, 2003 5:22 pm:

David Quinn wrote:

Analog: "It is a 'conjecture'."

DQ: "And what's the point of it?"

Symmetry Forms the Basis of Truth.

Formlessness is equivalent to "infinite symmetry":

The universal laws of nature are explained in terms of symmetry. The completed infinities, mathematician Georg Cantor's infinite sets, could be explained as cardinal identities, akin to "qualia" from which finite subsets, and elements of subsets, can be derived.

Completed infinities, called "alephs" are distributive in nature, similar to the way that a set of "red" objects has the distributive property of redness. Predicates like "red" are numbers in the sense that they interact algebraically according to the laws of Boolean algebra. Take one object away from the set of red objects and the distributive number "red" still describes the set. The distributive identity "natural number" or "real number" describes an entire collection of individual objects.

These alephs can be set into a one to one correspondence with a proper subset of of themselves. The "infinite" Cantorian alephs are really distributive.

Yet, if we have a finite set of 7 objects, the cardinal number 7 does not really distribute over its individual subsets. Take anything away from the set and the number 7 ceases to describe it.

Symmetry is analogous to a self evident truth and is distributive via the laws of nature, being distributed over the entire set called universe. A stratification of Cantorian alephs with varying degrees of freedom. More freedom = greater symmetry = higher infinity-alephs. So the highest aleph, the "absolute-infinity" distributes over the entire set called universe and gives it "identity".

The highest symmetry is a distributive mathematical identity. This fact is reflected in part, by the conservation laws.

So if an unbound-infinite-potential and a constrained-finite-bound-potential are somehow different yet the same. The difference and sameness relation is a duality. Freedom(higher symmetry) and constraint(lesser symmetry) forms a relation that can be described by an invariance principle.

On a flat Euclidean surface, the three angles of a triangle sum to 180 degrees. On the curved surface of a sphere, the three angles add up to more than 180 degrees. The two types of surfaces are not equivalent.

There is a rotational invariance for a triangle, that seems to hold for both types of surface though.

$ABC = BCA = CAB = CBA = BAC = ACB$

Does this rotational invariance hold for all geometries? I say yes, but I am not 100% sure yet. 99.999% It seems to point towards a type of duality for quantum mechanics and general relativity.

An interesting idea for a new "theory-conjecture" which is, that symmetry, not logic, forms the basis of mathematical truth.

Truth = Invariance principle.

Symmetry = invariance = identity

Aristotle's law of excluded middle is really an invariance principle. Symmetry forms the basis of logic.

$A \vee \sim A$

$T|F = F|T = T$

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

From Plato

Sun Dec 28, 2003 6:11 pm:

I still think that the main problem is that you view science from a certain perspective, which axiomatically prevents you from ascertaining certain things. I'll explain.

Quote:

"I'm not sure that I follow. How can gravity exist without the presence of mass-objects?"

Since Classical times, there have always been two major philosophies of science. One, advocated by Plato, viewed everything as deriving from a set of powers, which comprise reality. Plato states that "powers are a class of things that exist that enable us - or anything else for that manner - to do whatever we are capable of doing". Every action can be traced back to one or more powers, which themselves have no causal precedent, besides God. These powers, though not perceivable, can be revealed to the mind through another power, termed noesis or cognition, which is a power that enables knowledge of other powers. Because this is true, the universe is ordered in such a manner as to be understandable by noesis. Since it is demonstrable that these powers are universal, absolute and timeless, they fulfill all the criteria which you have asked for in terms of something being an "ultimate truth". We are forced to conclude that ultimate truths can be known through science, which without saying anything further already contradicts your original claim.

The other view, advocated by Aristotle, is that there is a class of things which have a priori power, such as number, which when applied to the universe yield knowledge. As such, Aristotle attempts to do away with a method of discovering truth by reducing a Socratic hypothesis to logical inductive/deductive method. This is called empiricism, which is a useful, yet ultimately misguided outlook, which has brought upon a rejection of scientific thought in intellectual circles that you exemplify. Because you only keep this approach in mind as the method of scientific inquiry, you mistakenly conclude that a proper scientific method requires logic.

For example, gravitation is a power, since a whole class of actions can be causally linked it, while it cannot in turn be linked to anything else. An Aristotelian view is that gravitation is a property of mass-objects, i.e. of some self-evident existence; thus, you have Newton's axiomatic outlook expressed in his "laws" of motion. However, with this approach you give up any knowledge of higher-order causality. For example, one cannot determine in this way why the planetary orbits are ordered in that particular fashion, why each planet occupies that particular orbit, why all planets revolve in the same direction, and so forth. The only way that the organization of the solar system was discovered by Kepler, after a millenia of Aristotelian blunder of Ptolemy, Copernicus, and Brahe, was through the method of hypothesis, proceeding from the causal supremacy of a power (i.e. gravitation) that organizes the orbits in a knowable way that then constrain the formation of planets at those particular distances from the sun. Thus, the entire process of generation and evolution of the solar system can be accounted for based on that principle.

Other powers act in the same way. Light obeys the principle of least time, but least time is not some property of light; space is ordered by least action, which is an efficiency principle; everything obeys the principle of conservation of energy. Plasmas obey a principle of electromagnetism; living systems obey a principle of negentropic growth, and so forth. I can demonstrate for you that from the principle of negentropic growth, which I hypothesized, I can account for every aspect of biological evolution. This is what it means to be a skilled scientist.

Quote:

"I come across this view all the time, but it's flawed in a number of ways. Its main flaw is that of equating all categories of logical truth with mathematical truths and/or 'formal systems which are internally consistent, yet inconsistent with reality'."

I have come across this view as well. The equality of logical and mathematical truths, such as identities, can be debated. I even think you might be right. However, I do not

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

accept anything as self-evident or true a priori, unless in some way connected to discovered principles or the process of discovery of new principles. Most logical truths are true because their application aids in discovery of new principles. Thus, in essence, these truths are nothing other than hypotheses that have been experimentally verified. For example, the principle of ontological paradox, which you may consider a logical identity of the sort A is A , or A is not non- A , is true because its application in conjunction with a scientific method aids in discovery of new universal physical principles. This is why I have stated that logic is subsumed by science, but in and out of itself it has no intrinsic value for the human species.

I re-state the principles of (Platonic) scientific inquiry:

1. The only ascertainable existence is that of universal physical principles or powers.
2. A proper scientific method allows one to obtain knowledge of universal physical principles by means of hypothesis.
3. All other provisional knowledge which science deals with can be traced back to the knowledge of those principles.
4. There is no such thing as a self-evident truth that is divorced from knowledge of universal physical principles.

I am looking forward to future discussion,
Sergei

From David Quinn

Sun Dec 28, 2003 6:13 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:
Quote:

DQ: "How have you established that the scientific method is the only valid path to truth?"

AB: "It is the most honest one we currently have for phenomenological events."

It's certainly the most honest one for investigating empirical theories. At the same time, it is useless when it comes to investigating logical and philosophical assertions. For those we need the other "honest method" at our disposal - namely, the philosophic method.

Quote:

"If you wish to separate yourself from a causal linkage to phenomenology you can come up with all sorts of conjectures. Doing so puts you on the side of those who enforced dogma as a way to silence those who were socially inconvenient."

To deny the existence and validity of the philosophic method is itself a form of dogmatism which is divorced from reality - albeit one that is very fashionable at the moment.

From David Quinn

Sun Dec 28, 2003 6:56 pm:

Sergei wrote:
Quote:

DQ: "I'm not sure that I follow. How can gravity exist without the presence of mass-objects?"

Sergei: "Since Classical times, there have always been two major philosophies of science. One, advocated by Plato, viewed everything as deriving from a set of powers, which comprise reality. Plato states that 'powers are a class of things that exist that enable us - or anything else for that manner - to do whatever we are capable of doing'. Every action can be traced back to one or more powers, which themselves have no causal precedent, besides God."

This is confusing. If God is the cause of these "powers", then the idea that they have no causal precedent is false.

Quote:

"These powers, though not perceivable, can be revealed to the mind through another power, termed noesis or cognition, which is a power that enables knowledge of other powers. Because this is true, the universe is ordered in such a manner as to be understandable by noesis. Since it is demonstrable that these powers are universal, absolute and timeless, they fulfill all the criteria which you have asked for in terms of something being an 'ultimate truth'. We are forced to conclude that ultimate truths can be known through sci-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ence, which without saying anything further already contradicts your original claim."

You haven't dealt with my point about the possibility of the perceived universe being a simulation of some kind. It could well be that the world is a computer simulation, with all of its "powers" arbitrarily programmed into it. If this is so (and keeping in mind that neither logical reasoning nor empirical testing can dismiss the possibility), then the "powers" would not be absolute. They would be contingent phenomenon that only occur within the simulated universe.

Quote:

"The other view, advocated by Aristotle, is that there is a class of things which have a priori power, such as number, which when applied to the universe yield knowledge. As such, Aristotle attempts to do away with a method of discovering truth by reducing a Socratic hypothesis to logical inductive/deductive method. This is called empiricism, which is a useful, yet ultimately misguided outlook, which has brought upon a rejection of scientific thought in intellectual circles that you exemplify. Because you only keep this approach in mind as the method of scientific inquiry, you mistakenly conclude that a proper scientific method requires logic."

I'm not aware of any of these intellectual circles that you speak of. My overwhelming experience of intellectuals, as far as this matter is concerned, is their total love for the scientific method, which is what I would term "empiricism", and a complete disbelief in the existence of a higher form of logic which goes beyond science.

You seem to be saying that you regard the core scientific laws of Nature to be independently existing things that are woven into the very fabric of Reality and causally create everything we experience. This means that you reject the view that these laws are mental creations that we infer and project onto Reality. Can you state exactly why you think this?

Quote:

"For example, gravitation is a power, since a whole class of actions can be causally linked it, while it cannot in turn be linked to anything else. An Aristotelian view is that gravitation is a property of mass-objects, i.e. of some self-evident existence; thus, you have Newton's axiomatic outlook expressed in his "laws" of motion."

Are you saying that that gravity can occur when there are no mass-objects?

Quote:

"However, with this approach you give up any knowledge of higher-order causality. For example, one cannot determine in this way why the planetary orbits are ordered in that particular fashion, why each planet occupies that particular orbit, why all planets revolve in the same direction, and so forth."

Well, at bottom, all of these things are determined by the principle of cause and effect, which is the root determiner of everything.

Quote:

DQ: I come across this view all the time, but it's flawed in a number of ways. Its main flaw is that of equating all categories of logical truth with mathematical truths and/or "formal systems which are internally consistent, yet inconsistent with reality"

Sergei: I have come across this view as well. The equality of logical and mathematical truths, such as identities, can be debated. I even think you might be right.

There's no doubt about it. Mathematical reasoning deals with mathematical concepts, while philosophical reasoning deals not only with philosophic concepts, but more general concepts as well. This alone makes them very different, even though both utilize pure deductive logic.

Quote:

"However, I do not accept anything as self-evident or true a priori, unless in some way connected to discovered principles or the process of discovery of new principles. Many logical truths are true

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

because their application aids in discovery of new principles. Thus, in essence, these truths are nothing other than hypotheses that have been experimentally verified. For example, the principle of ontological paradox is true because its application in conjunction with a scientific method aids in discovery of new universal physical principles. This is why I have stated that logic is subsumed by science, but in and out of itself it has no intrinsic value for the human species."

What about the truth that all things in the Universe are finite - i.e. fall short of constituting the totality of all there is? Here is a truth which is impossible to refute, goes beyond science and is too basic to link to discovered principles - unless we include the principle of $A=A$ into our purview. It is also a very meaningful truth for those with a large enough vision. How do you slot this into your framework?

From Andrew Beckwith

Mon Dec 29, 2003 8:24 am:

Quote:

"There's no doubt about it. Mathematical reasoning deals with mathematical concepts, while philosophical reasoning deals not only with philosophic concepts, but more general concepts as well. This alone makes them very different, even though both utilize pure deductive logic."

You obviously do not have a clue as to what prompts mathematical insight. Creativity is by its very nature often a NON deductive logical phenomena and is the well spring of all mathematics.

Since you missed this important datum, the rest of your reasoning past this reference point is flawed and should be reviewed by you.

From Kitten

Mon Dec 29, 2003 8:50 am:

I do not feel "scientific method is the only valid path to [universal] truth." One may find it through philosophical method, and thoughts...there are several universes includ-

ing one's personal universe effected and changed every second by one's thoughts and actions. Some people find religion as help, and believe spiritual strength is one way of finding these truths. I remind you all we were talking of Buddhism and Nirvana. I doubt highly that such a plane could be found through lab experiments.(Whether these spring from mathematical or scientific reasoning, or methods, is not in question.)

From M

Mon Dec 29, 2003 9:54 am

David Quinn wrote:

"You haven't dealt with my point about the possibility of the perceived universe being a simulation of some kind."

This is a conceptual dead end and, ironically, that end is you (or me). There is no reason to presume that external reality does not exist. We can't escape the filter of our senses, so why bother arguing over what happens without it? It doesn't even make sense to talk about "what happens" since that implies an event and events are only conceivable through the filter of our senses.

From Andrew Beckwith

Mon Dec 29, 2003 10:33 am:

Quote:

"It doesn't even make sense to talk about 'what happens' since that implies an event and events are only conceivable through the filter of our senses."

It is even worse than that. It appears that Quinn does not care about causal relationships. This is to put it mildly WEIRD. Philosophy with a total disconnect with causal reality is like a love affair without sex. Un-natural.

From Plato

Mon Dec 29, 2003 1:00 pm

I will answer all your queries at once in as complete manner as I can. I think you're ready to hear this, at any rate. I will demonstrate that those powers or universal principles are

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

in fact ultimate truths. Do understand though, that to completely address those questions I will need to write a book.

Quote:

“You haven't dealt with my point about the possibility of the perceived universe being a simulation of some kind.”

Quote:

“You seem to be saying that you regard the core scientific laws of Nature to be independently existing things that are woven into the very fabric of Reality and causally create everything we experience. This means that you reject the view that these laws are mental creations that we infer and project onto Reality. Can you state exactly why you think this?”

Quote:

“Are you saying that that gravity can occur when there are no mass-objects?”

I. Knowable (noetic) physical reality is not the same as perceived (empirical) reality. I define the former as an image of Reality generated by our cognition; I define the latter as an image of Reality generated by our sense-organs. The former is comprised of powers (thought-objects); the latter of matter (mass-objects). In the former, we view phenomena as ordered by various powers; in the latter, we view phenomena as properties (degrees of extension) of mass-objects. Perceived reality is an imperfect image of Reality because knowledge based on this reality always generates paradoxes, which are resolvable only by postulating the existence of powers (universal physical principles, universal laws, laws of nature) which themselves do not exist in perceived reality. While knowledge of perceived reality requires borrowing objects from knowable reality for completeness, knowledge of knowable reality does not generate any inconsistencies and thus does not require the introduction of additional classes (types) of objects from some higher reality (i.e. it is internally sufficient). This means that there is no higher (more perfect) reality than knowable reality. Since no higher reality exists, knowable reality is an isomorphic image of Reality in the same way that a

reflection in the mirror is an isomorphic image of perceived reality. Furthermore, it is quite obvious that any image of reality, isomorphic or otherwise, must be in some way already contained within that reality. Thus, both images of Reality must also be contained within Reality and be consistent with its Nature, much like a reflection in the mirror is contained within perceived reality and is consistent with its nature. In mathematical terms, this means that the range and domain (the image and the object imaged) of the transformation overlap, or in case of an isomorphic transformation are perfectly coincidental (onto). We are finally at our goal. Perceived reality is a map of Reality that is one-to-one, since that reality is logically coherent, but not onto, since some objects exist in Reality, but not in perceived reality. Since, perceived reality is not onto, it is incomplete and is acted upon by objects in Reality that are not perceivable; this generates ontological paradoxes in attempting to base knowledge solely on perceived reality (empiricism). In contrast, knowable reality is a mapping that is both one-to-one and onto. Since, no higher types need be introduced in that reality, there is no object that exists in reality but not in knowable reality. Thus, knowable reality is a perfect image or is perfectly correspondent with Reality. Objects of knowable reality are mental constructs (in Reality), but since they are isomorphic to objects of Reality, these powers or universal principles necessarily exist as objects in Reality, although may differ in subtle ways (so that the isomorphism is not perturbed). This makes the answer to your question on gravity trivial. Gravity is an object that exists in knowable reality; mass-objects are objects that exist in perceptual reality; since the two realities are independent maps of Reality, gravity cannot be an extension of mass-objects, in the same way that shadows cast by trees cannot be an extension of reflections on a pond surface produced by those same trees - both are independent images of perceptual reality.

II. In addition, objects of knowable reality are not akin to rules of a computer simulation or any other logical system. The single greatest reason is that the universe allows for cognition i.e. a power that is illogical and thus incoherent with an otherwise logical

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

design of the system. Cognition is illogical because it can introduce propositions which validity cannot be ascertained within the bounds of any existing closed system (i.e. it can generate hypotheses that are not obtainable through deductive/inductive means and can only be validated by experiment). A logical system that allows for an illogical existence is a contradiction, thus reality is not a logical system. To sum up, reality knowable through scientific method is in perfect correspondence with Reality, no higher reality exists and knowable reality is not organized in the same manner as a logical system. All of that means that universal physical principles are ultimate truths (the question of God does not pose a problem here, but I am not compelled to elaborate on it).

Quote:

"My overwhelming experience of intellectuals, as far as this matter is concerned, is their total love for the scientific method, which is what I would term 'empiricism', and a complete disbelief in the existence of a higher form of logic which goes beyond science."

This is a misuse of the term empiricism. Empiricism is a philosophy of science that claims that perceived reality is the only knowable reality. Here's Robbie's tractation of empiricism:

Quote:

"We can't escape the filter of our senses, so why bother arguing over what happens without it?"

I couldn't have said it better myself. I have already mentioned above the basic reason for its falsehood - knowledge based solely on perceived reality is always incomplete and needs to be "patched up" by inventing various "imaginary" physical principles. Of course, they'r imaginary only to an empiricist, in actuality they are more real than things you perceive, because their existence is experimentally validateable. These "imaginary" objects comprise what I was referring to above as knowable reality or reality based on scientific principles. David, I think we can both agree that empiricism is not a path to truth, though sufficient for the purposes of

everyday academic discourse. However, I am putting forth a method of scientific thought that has been prevalent in history. Most great discoveries of universal law were attained using this method, rather than a rejection of scientific principles altogether in favor of "ivory-tower" philosophizing. How can you hope to generate a coherent view of reality by rational means alone? You have presented neither a consistent view of Reality to contrary to what I have presented nor a rigorous method for grasping that Reality. So far, your argument consists of rejections of a coherent scientific view of reality, questioning a millennia of human progress and civilizational development. Thus before proceeding, I must ask for as complete an answer as possible to the above two-fold inquiry, in the same manner as I have satisfied yours.

From Dan Rowden

Mon Dec 29, 2003 1:49 pm

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

DR: "The physical duration of a person's life has nothing whatsoever to do with the search for Nirvana."

AB: "Deliberately tampering with mother nature so as to avoid the normal birth-death cycle has EVERYTHING to do with Nirvana. Think it over, please."

The idea that Nirvana is some place that one goes to (or where some aspect of "subtle consciousness" goes to) is a particular delusion held by so-called "Pure Land" Buddhists. It's somewhat akin to the Christian notion of Heaven and expresses a very disturbing religiosity that has long since crept into Buddhism. One of the problems when speaking about Christian or Buddhist thought is that it is difficult - other than in some very broad respects - to speak generically about Buddhist ideas.

Samsara, the cycle of rebirth, does not refer to life and death in a literal sense - it refers to ego cycles that happen right now in the life we're living. I know that some Buddhist traditions have adopted a view equating transmigrational notions of reincarnation with Karma, Samsara and Nirvana, but I have little interest in discussing Buddhism in terms of these psuedo-religious Buddhist traditions.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

To me that is like discussing something of great worth via its lowest common denominator. It would be like discussing Taoism through the vehicle of religious Taoism, which is, of course, utterly vacuous.

As to the notion of tampering with Nature. Any Buddhist who proposes a notion such as that is quite obviously a dolt, since the whole idea is, of itself, doltish. How exactly is it that Nature could be tampered with? Everything that is is part of Nature. I must admit I've not come across any Buddhists who express any such concept. I've come across plenty of Christians who have, although in their case you can usually replace Nature with God. But in the end it is an intellectually worthless notion.

In a manner of speaking, Nature continually tampers with herself via the processes of evolution. What humans do is part of those processes.

From David Quinn

Mon Dec 29, 2003 5:11 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "There's no doubt about it. Mathematical reasoning deals with mathematical concepts, while philosophical reasoning deals not only with philosophical concepts, but more general concepts as well. This alone makes them very different, even though both utilize pure deductive logic."

AB: "You obviously do not have a clue as to what prompts mathematical insight. Creativity is by its very nature often a NON deductive logical phenomena and is the well spring of all mathematics."

I've not made any comment to suggest that is not the case. My point was made in response to an entirely different issue - namely, the idea that philosophical reasoning suffers from same limitations as mathematical reasoning when it comes to yielding truths about the "real world".

M wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "You haven't dealt with my point about the possibility of the perceived universe being a simulation of some kind."

M: "This is a conceptual dead end and, ironically, that end is you (or me). There is no reason to presume that external reality does not exist."

There is no question that external reality (i.e. reality perceived by the senses) exists. The question is whether it is possible to completely dismiss the notion that it is a simulation. And the answer is, no, we can't dismiss it altogether.

The very real possibility that the world is a simulation is a *truth* about the nature of Reality and cannot be ignored by anyone claiming knowledge of Reality. The only way that Sergei can claim that the core scientific principles are absolute in nature is by pretending that this particular truth doesn't exist.

In other words, he is essentially no different to the fundamentalist Christian who blocks inconvenient facts out of his mind in order to pretend to himself that he has knowledge of God.

Quote:

"We can't escape the filter of our senses, so why bother arguing over what happens without it? It doesn't even make sense to talk about "what happens" since that implies an event and events are only conceivable through the filter of our senses."

It is perfectly legitimate to discuss this issue in the context of what constitutes ultimate truth. The fundamental uncertainty of the world is *real* and needs to be dealt with by anyone seeking fundamental knowledge of Reality. It is important to discover those higher forms of knowledge which are unaffected by the possibility that the world is an hallucination. Indeed, it is the doorway into the realm of genius.

From David Quinn

Mon Dec 29, 2003 6:16 pm:

Plato wrote:

Quote:

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

DQ: "You seem to be saying that you regard the core scientific laws of Nature to be independently existing things that are woven into the very fabric of Reality and causally create everything we experience. This means that you reject the view that these laws are mental creations that we infer and project onto Reality. Can you can state exactly why you think this?"

DQ: "Are you saying that that gravity can occur when there are no mass-objects?"

Plato: "I. Knowable (noetic) physical reality is not the same as perceived (empirical) reality. I define the former as an image of Reality generated by our cognition; I define the latter as an image of Reality generated by our sense-organs. The former is comprised of powers (thought-objects); the latter of matter (mass-objects)..."

I can't read any further than this because the distinctions you make here don't make any sense to me - which means that, for me, the rest of your argument lacks a foundation. The main problem I have with your distinctions is that empirical (perceived) reality is actually conceptual in nature and therefore a part of noetic reality. In my eyes, then, you've artificially divided knowable Reality into two realms and then pretended that one of them is somehow not a division of knowable Reality.

This relates to what you wrote further down:

Quote:

"Gravity is an object that exists in knowable reality; mass-objects are objects that exist in perceptual reality; since the two realities are independent maps of Reality, gravity cannot be an extension of mass-objects, in the same way that shadows cast by trees cannot be an extension of reflections on a pond surface produced by those same trees - both are independent images of perceptual reality."

Again, these distinctions don't mean anything to me. We experience gravity through our senses, in the same way that we experience mass-objects. We comprehend the nature of mass-objects through our concepts

and reasonings, in the same way that we are able to comprehend the nature of gravity.

I won't be able to follow your thesis any further until you can explain why this basic distinction is rational and necessary.

Quote:

"II. In addition, objects of knowable reality are not akin to rules of a computer simulation or any other logical system."

They could easily be the effects of rules built into the system.

Quote:

"The single greatest reason is that the universe allows for cognition i.e. a power that is illogical and thus incoherent with an otherwise logical design of the system. Cognition is illogical because it can introduce propositions which validity cannot be ascertained within the bounds of any existing closed system (i.e. it can generate hypotheses that are not obtainable through deductive/inductive means and can only be validated by experiment). A logical system that allows for an illogical existence is a contradiction, thus reality is not a logical system."

You're making this up, surely. It is like saying that ordered systems cannot produce randomness and chaos - which is plainly absurd.

Even if "cognition" did nothing else but produce false ideas, it doesn't mean that it cannot be the product of a logical system. For it could easily be the case that this propensity for falseness has been programmed into the system.

Quote:

"David, I think we can both agree that empiricism is not a path to truth, though sufficient for the purposes of everyday academic discourse. However, I am putting forth a method of scientific thought that has been prevalent in history. Most great discoveries of universal law were attained using this method, rather than a rejection of scientific principles altogether in favor of "ivory-tower" philosophizing."

I don't really reject scientific principles or the scientific method. They both have their

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

place in the human store of knowledge, and they are both very useful when it comes to our practical needs. I simply reject the ability of science to replace philosophy as a means of uncovering Ultimate Truth. This will never happen, just as reading the Bible will never replace the scientific method as a tool for uncovering scientific principles.

Quote:

"How can you hope to generate a coherent view of reality by rational means alone?"

I've done it by creating definitions that necessarily apply to all things in the Universe. An example is the definition of a "thing" - namely, that which is bounded and falls short of constituting the totality of all there is. Reasonings about this definition can then lead to knowledge which applies to all things - e.g. that all things are causally created, that all things lack inherent existence, that nothing ultimately exists, etc. And it is through this process that one can finally begin to gain an understanding of the nature of Reality itself.

CHAPTER IV

From Plato

Mon Dec 29, 2003 7:22 pm:

Quote:

"I can't read any further than this because the distinctions you make here don't make any sense to me - which means that, for me, the rest of your argument lacks a foundation. The main problem I have with your distinctions is that empirical (perceived) reality is actually conceptual in nature and therefore a part of noetic reality. In my eyes, then, you've artificially divided knowable Reality into two realms and then pretended that one of them is somehow not a division of knowable Reality."

Granted, science education is pretty bad these days, but it is an obvious shortcoming on your part to assume that everything in science can be accounted for based on things you perceive. Even simple things, like gravity, cannot be perceived directly. You perceive an apple falling on your head, but you cannot perceive gravity. You can only hypothesize it based on what you perceive. Listen carefully now. Your senses reveal to you an image of the world around you. You walk outside at night and you look up at the night sky. You see a sphere of large radius, with you at the center, and with stars positioned on the surface of that sphere. This is what is known as a Sensorium or the conceptual view of the universe that is based on your sense-perception. This is what I call percep-

tual reality. In this view of reality, you already have cause and effect, but causes are mediated by some other object in that reality (i.e. efficient cause). For example, one domino falls and hits another. However that view of reality is incomplete, since you begin to notice various paradoxes. For example, you notice that your friend is also claiming that he is at the center of the universe. Maybe the celestial "sphere" is not a sphere after all? You notice two types of motion in the sky - regular motion of fixed stars and irregular motion of planetary bodies. You are taken by the "powerful sense of wonder to look into causes" that are not apparent to you from simple observation (i.e. final causes). You begin to hypothesize. Over time, these validated hypotheses form a body of scientific knowledge. Each hypothesis proposes an agent that is beyond your Sensorium, but which acts on and organizes objects within it. These hypotheses taken together, form the basis for a different conceptual view of reality, which I called noetic reality. In noetic reality you deal with objects that do not exist in your Sensorium, things like forces, fields, space-time curvature, waves and particles, symmetries and anisotropies, principles and laws. You must introduce these "imaginary" constructs which I call thought-objects into your conceptual view of reality in order for it to be complete at any moment in time. This parallels the development in mathematics, in which sense-perceptible principles govern counting numbers, but other numbers begin to appear, like complex numbers, which are related to principles that govern evolution and transformation of physical systems. Sci-

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

ence strives to develop the most truthful image of reality possible, which is why it views reality as noetic reality or reality that is composed of thought-objects. If you fail to see that I recommend remedial college physics and Plato readings.

Quote:

"You're making this up, surely. It is like saying that ordered systems cannot produce randomness and chaos - which is plainly absurd."

I thought I was very clear on what I said. I said logical systems cannot produce something that is illogical, it is not the same at all. If the system generates an illogical output, then it can no longer be logical. As your computer what it thinks about that.

Quote:

"I've done it by creating definitions that necessarily apply to all things in the Universe. An example is the definition of a 'thing' - namely, that which is bounded and falls short of constituting the totality of all there is. Reasonings about this definition can then lead to knowledge which applies to all things - e.g. that all things are causally created, that all things lack inherent existence, that nothing ultimately exists, etc. And it is through this process that one can finally begin to gain an understanding of the nature of Reality itself."

You call this philosophy, where you sit on a toilet and come up with postulates as a path to ultimate truth? Give me a break! These things are at best conjectures. And you call this understanding reality? Based on a few amorphous conjectures? Science gives you an image of reality that is as clear as your face in the mirror. You are offering a muddled reflection. The human race would long be extinct if we followed your advice. Besides, all the things you state are hypotheses which have been proven because they are an integral part of a scientific method. "All things short of totality" is a restatement of "a whole is greater than a part", which is a scientific principle, proven to be valid by scientific inquiry into everything from planetary orbits to the biosphere. "All things are causally

created" is a hypothesis on which all science is dependent and thus has been post factum validated. Logic is a powerful tool, but it is only an accessory.

From David Quinn

Mon Dec 29, 2003 8:07 pm:

Plato wrote:

Quote:

"David, this simply reveals to me your ignorance in regards to the body of scientific knowledge."

The issue at hand is a philosophical matter, not a scientific one. I am questioning your philosophical carving up of Reality into these distinct realms.

Quote:

"Granted, science education is pretty bad these days, but it is an obvious short-coming on your part to assume that everything in science can be accounted for based on things you perceive. Even simple things, like gravity, cannot be perceived directly."

Neither can mass-objects be perceived directly. What we call "mass-objects" are actually artificial constructs which the brain whips up in response to patterns of electro-magnetic frequencies and the like.

Quote:

"You perceive an apple falling on your head, but you cannot perceive the true nature of gravity."

We can perceive the effects of gravity via the motion of the apple, just as we can perceive the effects of the apple via the light bouncing off it.

Quote:

"Listen carefully now. Your senses reveal to you an image of the world around you. You walk outside at night and you look up at the night sky. You see a sphere of large radius, with you at the center, and with stars positioned on the surface of that sphere. This is what was known as a Sensorium or the conceptual view of the

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

universe that is based on your sense-perception. This is what I call perceptual reality."

Okay.
Quote:

"In this view of reality, you already have certain principles, like cause and effect. One domino falls and hits another. However, that view of reality is incomplete, since you begin to notice various paradoxes. For example, you notice that your friend that is walking together with you at night is also claiming that he is at the center of the universe. So which one of you is really at the center of the universe?"

For all I know, my friend doesn't have any other existence apart from what I perceive of him inside my Sensorium. At bottom, all I ever really *know* is my own Sensorium, and, because of this, the "paradox" doesn't have any basis.

Quote:

"You notice two types of motion in the Sensorium - regular motion of fixed stars and irregular motion of planetary bodies. You are taken by the 'powerful sense of wonder to look into causes' that are not apparent to you from simple observation. You begin to hypothesize. Over time, these validated hypotheses form a body of scientific knowledge. Each hypothesis proposes an agent that is beyond your Sensorium, but which acts on and organizes objects within it. These hypotheses taken together, form the basis for a different conceptual view of reality, which [I] called noetic reality. In noetic reality you deal with objects that do not exist in your Sensorium, things like forces, fields, space-time curvature, waves and particles, symmetries and anisotropies, principles and laws. You must introduce these 'imaginary' constructs which I call thought-objects into your conceptual view of reality in order for it to be complete at any moment in time. This parallels the development in mathematics, in which sense-perceptible principles govern counting numbers, but other numbers be-

gin to appear, like complex numbers, which are related to principles that govern evolution and transformation of physical systems. Imaginary numbers are 'thought-objects' that do not exist in the domain of real numbers, but nevertheless organize that domain, even when you had no idea these numbers existed. Science strives to develop the most truthful image of reality possible, which is why science views reality as noetic reality or reality that is composed of thought-objects."

I understand all of this. But it doesn't demonstrate why you think scientific principles are independently existing absolutes. How do you answer the objection that universal scientific principles are mentally inferred and extrapolated from a small pool of observations carried out by the human race and, like all inferences, their universality is inherently uncertain? At bottom, you have no way of knowing whether or not they continue to exist beyond the observable universe.

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Dec 30, 2003 12:00 am:

Quote:

Plato: "David, this simply reveals to me your ignorance in regards to the body of scientific knowledge."

DQ: "The issue at hand is a philosophical matter, not a scientific one. I am questioning your philosophical carving up of Reality into these distinct realms."

David,

Do you get out much? There is a continuum of interfacing between philosophy and Quantum mechanics which shows your division is bogus. Consider this, the indeterminacy of probability states in quantum theory had more philosophical weight behind them than all of the post modern philosophy tomes (I unfortunately read a good number of them too !) put together. HOWEVER, the starting point to this merging of philosophy and science was neatly categorized by the dynamics of the Schrodinger equation which is NOT a philosophy statement ! Still though what you continue to over look is that good

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

philosophy has a causality linkage as a starting which you appear to be ignoring.

produced from within a logical system - has no basis.

Quote:

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Dec 30, 2003 12:08 am:

Quote:

"You call this philosophy, where you sit on a toilet and come up with postulates as a path to ultimate truth?"

Plato,

David does not believe in truth as something which can be inferred by trial and error. Not him. He is akin to the ancient Greeks who STARTED the scientific method but who had a weird distaste for the results only obtained via laboratory testing of postulates.

From David Quinn

Tue Dec 30, 2003 4:45 pm:

For some unknown reason, I failed to respond to the rest of Plato's post.

He wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "You're making this up, surely. It is like saying that ordered systems cannot produce randomness and chaos - which is plainly absurd."

Plato: "I thought I was very clear on what I said. I said logical systems cannot produce something that is illogical, it is not the same at all. If the system generates an illogical output, then it can no longer be logical. As your computer what it thinks about that."

Assuming this to be true (and I see no reason why it is), it doesn't have any bearing on the issue of whether or not the world is a simulation of some kind, for two reasons:

(a) There is no reason why the simulation has to be logical in nature.

(b) Even if the simulation was logical to begin with, there is always the possibility of bugs corrupting the system. We all know from personal experience with PCs that bugs in the programming can produce corrupted data.

Thus, the objection that Sergei raised - namely, that illogical cognition cannot be

DQ: "I've done it by creating definitions that necessarily apply to all things in the Universe. An example is the definition of a 'thing' - namely, that which is bounded and falls short of constituting the totality of all there is. Reasonings about this definition can then lead to knowledge which applies to all things - e.g. that all things are causally created, that all things lack inherent existence, that nothing ultimately exists, etc. And it is through this process that one can finally begin to gain an understanding of the nature of Reality itself."

Plato: "You call this philosophy, where you sit on a toilet and come up with postulates as a path to ultimate truth? Give me a break! These things are at best conjectures."

They're certainties. If you want to disagree, then please provide a demonstration of how an object or event in the Universe fails to fall into the category of a "thing".

Quote:

"And you call this understanding reality?"

It leads to the greatest knowledge there is. Quote:

"Science gives you an image of reality that is as clear as your face in the mirror. You are offering a muddled reflection. The human race would long be extinct if we followed your advice."

How does heightened rational thought, which doesn't reject science, imperil our survival as a species?

Quote:

"Besides, all the things you state are hypotheses which have been proven because they are an integral part of a scientific method. 'All things short of totality' is a restatement of 'a whole is greater than a part', which is a scientific principle, proven to be valid by scientific inquiry

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

into everything from planetary orbits to the biosphere."

Where is the scientific experiment that proves without any shadow of a doubt that all objects and events in the Universe are "things"? Nowhere to be found. It cannot be done that way. It is purely a matter of logic.

Quote:

"All things are causally created' is a hypothesis on which all science is dependent and thus has been post factum validated."

Where is the scientific experiment that proves without any shadow of a doubt that all things have causes? Again, it's nowhere to be found. It is purely a matter of logic.

Quote:

"Logic is a powerful tool, but it is only an accessory."

For science, maybe. It is central, however, to the conduct of philosophy.

Why do you guys constantly feel a need to demonize and dismiss philosophic logic? It doesn't threaten the practice of science in any way. It does, however, threaten to lower the status of science in the larger scheme of things. Perhaps this is what you are objecting to...?

From David Quinn

Tue Dec 30, 2003 5:09 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

"Do you get out much? There is a continuum of interfacing between philosophy and Quantum mechanics which shows your division is bogus. Consider this, the indeterminacy of probability states in quantum theory had more philosophical weight behind them than all of the post modern philosophy tomes (I unfortunately read a good number of them too !) put together."

God, what a conundrum, trying to decide which of the two groups are the more philosophically backward - postmodernist phi-

losophers or modern physicists? A dead heat, I should think.

Quote:

"HOWEVER, the starting point to this merging of philosophy and science was neatly categorized by the dynamics of the Schrodinger equation which is NOT a philosophy statement!"

I agree that it is not a philosophical statement and hence it follows that it doesn't have any relevance to the philosophic process of understanding Reality.

Quote:

"Still though what you continue to overlook is that good philosophy has a causality linkage as a starting which you appear to be ignoring."

Good philosophy starts with premises and concepts which logically relate to all things in the Universe. That is its causal linkage. It bypasses science and connects directly with Reality as we experience it.

Quote:

"David does not believe in truth as something which can be inferred by trial and error."

Not empirical theories, no. There is always the possibility that an empirical theory can be overturned with the discovery of new evidence, no matter how well-established the theory seems to be.

Quote:

"He is akin to the ancient Greeks who STARTED the scientific method but who had a weird distaste for the results only obtained via laboratory testing of postulates."

I've already stated numerous times that I have no problem with the practice of science or the theories it produces. It has no bearing upon the kind of knowledge that I deal with as a philosopher.

From Plato

Tue Dec 30, 2003 6:01 pm:

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Quote:

"The issue at hand is a philosophical matter, not a scientific one. I am questioning your philosophical carving up of Reality into these distinct realms."

As Andy said, I don't see any distinction between the two. Philosophy divorced from science is just as impotent as science divorced from philosophy.

Quote:

"Neither can mass-objects be perceived directly. What we call 'mass-objects' are actually artificial constructs which the brain whips up in response to patterns of electro-magnetic frequencies and the like."

That's clearly true, yet how perceived reality is generated is none of my concern. All I need is that perceived reality is an image of Reality.

Quote:

"We can perceive the effects of gravity via the motion of the apple, just as we can perceive the effects of the apple via the light bouncing off it."

That's clearly true, and is precisely the point - perceived reality, like shadows on a dimly fire-lit cave wall, is an image of effects of Reality on the sense-organs. The Nature of either apple or gravity does not lie within the bounds of that reality. However, their Nature can be grasped by the Mind through Hypothesis. This is the reason for separating a scientific view of Reality from that based on naive sense-perception. One can go through life without ever knowing or questioning the Nature of things, completely satisfied with his/her Sensorium. Yet, a scientific method is based on resolution of paradoxes generated by assumptions based on naive-sense perception. Naive-sense perception tells you that the Earth is flat, that the Sun rotates around the Earth, that the orbits of the planets are circular, that Space is infinite in extension and infinitely divisible, that there are three dimensions, that line is the shortest distance between two points, that time flows equally and homogeneously, and so forth. However,

through hypothesis, we know these things to be false. The evolution of science is proceeding in the direction from more intuitive, based on experience, to more abstract, based on hypothesis. This abstract, imaginary, theoretical, however you please, view of the world, is what I called noetic reality. Each hypothesis comprising noetic reality is a single thought-object, in contrast to mass-objects that comprise perceived reality. At this point I do not care to determine how noetic reality is generated, only that it is a different image of Reality.

Quote:

"I understand all of this. But it doesn't demonstrate why you think scientific principles are independently existing absolutes. How do you answer the objection that universal scientific principles are mentally [inferred] and extrapolated from a small pool of observations carried out by the human race and, like all inferences, their universality is inherently uncertain? At bottom, you have no way of knowing whether or not they continue to exist beyond the observable universe."

Obviously we must use observations or the objects in perceived reality as a stepping stone because we cannot "sense" Reality with our minds. But it is fallacious to think cognition can only make (logical) inferences from those observations. If the only statements that could be made based on perceived reality were of logical (inductive/deductive) nature, then the noetic reality would fundamentally be constrained to operate within the bounds of perceived reality and your point that there is no difference between the two would be quite valid. However, that is clearly not so because cognition allows generation of propositions which are illogical. These hypotheses, therefore, can introduce thought-objects into noetic reality that lie outside of perceived reality.

So clearly scientific principles do not exist in the observable universe - they exist in the mind. The more fundamental question though, is whether the image in the mind based on these principles is isomorphic to Reality or whether it is simply a mental construct. Now, listen carefully. Perceived reality is an incomplete image that is subsumed by

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

noetic reality. Assume there is another image that subsumes noetic reality, but is unknowable to us. Thus, the map from R->S(Reality to Sensorium) is in the domain of N (noesis) that is in the domain of H (higher reality). Thus, there are objects in N that are not in P and in H that are not in N or P. Yet, since P,N,H all belong to R, objects that are in N but not in P map onto some objects in P. However, that creates an ontological inconsistency in P, that is resolvable if one identifies the corresponding object in N (i.e. existence of scientific principle is recognized due to some paradox in the Sensorium). Now, apply this to N and H. If there is an object in H that is not in N, it must be mapped to some object in N, creating an ontological inconsistency in N. However, N is ontologically consistent, thus H = N.

Essentially, the way we think is reflected in the design of the universe. Call it egoism or anthropomorphism, but scientific progress has increased man's power into the universe by at least 3 orders of magnitude so far (judging by our ability to sustain 10 billion people at present levels of technology, versus 10 million for a primitive hunter-gatherer society). How much of that has been generated by "toilet-bound" rationalizing? If cognition is out of correspondence with Reality, then this increase in power is what, accidental? People come up with all sorts of random principles and some of them just happen to please the little green men under the floorboards of the universe so they decide to give man a little more power? I mean there is a lawful process of discovery here. The universe is not indifferent to human creative thought.

From Plato

Tue Dec 30, 2003 6:11 pm:

Quote:

"Why do you guys constantly feel a need to demonize and dismiss philosophic logic? It doesn't threaten the practice of science in any way. It does, however, threaten to lower the status of science in the larger scheme of things. Perhaps this is what you are objecting to...?"

It seems that Kitten has been able to unwittingly capture the essence of my thinking

about various images of Reality in 7 lines versus my endless gibberish. Sometimes, David, I feel like both scientists and philosophers are on the losing side here - when all the battles are fought and all the dust has settled, poets will own the day. This is an awesome poem and well worth thinking about in the context that I have presented (as well as in other contexts).

When abstract paintings are reflected in mirrors

It reminds me of trees bouncing off the surface of a lake.

*And although my body cries out to dive in
My will forces my Mind to fall into itself.*

As it reels, trying to find its person,

I realize that what it truly seeks is its reflection

In an abstract painting.

I am totally going to kill the poem here, but what she's really trying to say... its cuz i know better... *laughs* an abstract painting, a beautiful artwork that is the universe has many images, which is akin to reflections of trees on the surface of a lake; and although the body yearns to live in the shadow of reality, the Mind rejects it realizing that what it truly seeks is its own reflection in the universe. That is so perfect!!! Thanks sweets.

From Kitten

Tue Dec 30, 2003 7:37 pm:

No problem sugar *giggles and kisses Plato* and thank you *kisses again slowly, looks at people watching, frowns and pulls him into another room smiling**pokes head out* He'll be back in a moment... *closes door, then reopens it* or two... *closes door again*

From RShah

Tue Dec 30, 2003 7:41 pm:

David Quinn wrote:

DQ: "I've done it by creating definitions that necessarily apply to all things in the Universe. An example is the definition of a 'thing' - namely, that which is bounded and falls short of constituting the totality of all there is. Reasonings about

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

this definition can then lead to knowledge which applies to all things - e.g. that all things are causally created, that all things lack inherent existence, that nothing ultimately exists, etc. And it is through this process that one can finally begin to gain an understanding of the nature of Reality itself."

They're certainties. If you want to disagree, then please provide a demonstration of how an object or event in the Universe fails to fall into the category of a "thing".

Hmm...so energy isn't a "thing," correct? Is energy to "thing" as mass is to matter? What do you think? Are you suggesting that only energy exists, based on your above comments?

From Andrew Beckwith

Wed Dec 31, 2003 3:21 am:

Quote:

"Good philosophy starts with premises and concepts which logically relate to all things in the Universe. That is its causal linkage. It bypasses science and connects directly with Reality as we experience it."

Garbage. You cannot by pass observational work and have a causal linkage.

Quote:

"Why do you guys constantly feel a need to demonize and dismiss philosophic logic?"

Because without genuine causal linkage(not your mis definition of the term) it is slopism. Mainly you thinking you are the center of the universe. We don't make that mistake. You do. This is incoherent.

From Kitten

Wed Dec 31, 2003 7:03 am:

walks clumsily out of the room in a bathrobe with a cup of chai latte *grumbles something about it being morning and light out* *sits in the comfy leather couch and lights a smoke, looks at the disapproving faces and puts it out grumbling something about it being early* *rubs her eyes sleepily

and smiles meekly* I agree with Andy, *blinks wildly and sips latte* It certainly would be a poorly thought out form of solipsism. *finishes latte and lights up a cigarette, looks at the disapproving faces* *sticks out her tongue* It's so early in the morning, *grumbles* I should be permitted to self-poison in the library *pouts and walks towards kitchen*

From David Quinn

Wed Dec 31, 2003 6:04 pm:

RShah wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "I've done it by creating definitions that necessarily apply to all things in the Universe. An example is the definition of a 'thing' - namely, that which is bounded and falls short of constituting the totality of all there is. Reasonings about this definition can then lead to knowledge which applies to all things - e.g. that all things are causally created, that all things lack inherent existence, that nothing ultimately exists, etc. And it is through this process that one can finally begin to gain an understanding of the nature of Reality itself.

"They're certainties. If you want to disagree, then please provide a demonstration of how an object or event in the Universe fails to fall into the category of a 'thing'."

RHash: "Hmm...so energy isn't a 'thing,' correct? Is energy to 'thing' as mass is to matter? What do you think? Are you suggesting that only energy exists, based on your above comments?"

It depends on how this "energy" is defined or conceived. If it is conceived to be the Totality of all there is, then there is nothing else apart from energy. If it is conceived to be a phenomenon within the Totality, then obviously other things exist besides energy.

To my mind, "energy" and "matter" are generic terms that really don't apply to anything. No one ever observes pure energy or pure matter. We only observe varying kinds of phenomena which we categorize as being "forms of energy" or "forms of matter". Energy and matter are ultimately just as ficti-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

tious as "spirit" and "divine essence" and the like.

From David Quinn

Wed Dec 31, 2003 6:25 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "Good philosophy starts with premises and concepts which logically relate to all things in the Universe. That is its causal linkage. It bypasses science and connects directly with Reality as we experience it."

AB: "Garbage. You cannot by pass observational work and have a causal linkage."

I said that philosophy bypasses science, not observation. Do you think that philosophers lack eyes?

When a philosopher comes up with a logical truth such as "all things are finite", or "all things are caused", he tests it both for its inner consistency from a logical point of view and also how it applies to the wider Universe. If he finds that it logically applies to everything in existence out of necessity, then it means that he has done the observational work and finds that it passes the test of being a meaningful piece of knowledge about reality.

Quote:

DQ: "Why do you guys constantly feel a need to demonize and dismiss philosophic logic?"

AB: "Because without genuine causal linkage (not your mis definition of the term) it is slopism. Mainly you thinking you are the center of the universe. We don't make that mistake. You do. This is incoherent."

I've spent much of this thread trying to convince you guys not to ignore the possibility that the universe is a simulation and face up to the fact that the activities you are engaging in (scientiific theorizing) may not have any universal or ultimate significance at all. In other words, I've been battling against your own anthropomorphisms. But it's been a real slog, I can tell you!

From David Quinn

Wed Dec 31, 2003 7:52 pm:

Plato wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "The issue at hand is a philosophical matter, not a scientific one. I am questioning your philosophical carving up of Reality into these distinct realms."

Plato: "As Aaron said, I don't see any distinction between the two. Philosophy divorced from science is just as impotent as [science] divorced from philosophy."

It is a philosophical matter because the division that you make in an otherwise seamless Reality is a conceptual one and not verifiable (or falsifiable) by empirical/scientific testing.

Moreover, you're creating this division in order to lay down an intellectual basis for your philosophical view that science can access principles that are universal and absolute. Again, this view is philosophical in nature because it is not one that can be verified by empirical testing.

Quote:

DQ: "But it doesn't demonstrate why you think scientific principles are independently existing absolutes. How do you answer the objection that universal scientific principles are mentally inferred and extrapolated from a small pool of observations carried out by the human race and, like all inferences, their universality is inherently uncertain? At bottom, you have no way of knowing whether or not they continue to exist beyond the observable universe."

Plato: "Obviously we must use observations or the objects in perceived reality as a stepping stone because we cannot "sense" Reality with our minds. But it is fallacious to think cognition can only make (logical) inferences from those observations. If the only statements that could be made based on perceived reality were of logical (inductive/deductive) nature, then the noetic reality would fundamentally be constrained to operate within the bounds of perceived reality and your point that there is no difference between the two would be quite valid. However, that is clearly not so because cognition allows

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

generation of propositions which are illogical. These hypotheses, therefore, can introduce thought-objects into noetic reality that lie outside of perceived reality."

Translation: We can imagine things.

Quote:

"So clearly scientific principles do not exist in the observable universe - they exist in the mind. The more fundamental question though, is whether the image in the mind based on these principles is isomorphic to Reality or whether it is simply a mental construct. Now, listen carefully. Perceived reality is an incomplete image that is subsumed by noetic reality. Assume there is another image that subsumes noetic reality, but is unknowable to us. Thus, the map from R->S(Reality to Sensorium) is in the domain of N (noesis) that is in the domain of H (higher reality)."

What is higher reality? What is the difference between it and Reality?

Quote:

"Thus, there are objects in N that are not in P and in H that are not in N or P."

I cannot agree or disagree with this until you define what higher reality is and how it differs from Reality. The same goes for the rest of your argument

Quote:

"Essentially, the way we think is reflected in the design of the universe. Call it egoism or anthropomorphism, but scientific progress has increased man's power in the universe by at least 3 orders of magnitude so far (judging by our ability to sustain 10 billion people at present levels of technology, versus 10 million for a primitive hunter-gatherer society).

"How much of that has been generated by "toilet-bound" rationalizing? If cognition is out of correspondence with Reality, then this increase in power is what, accidental? People come up with all sorts of random principles and some of them just happen to please the little green men under the floorboards of the universe so they decide to give man a little more power? I mean there is a lawful process of

discovery here. The universe is not indifferent to human creative thought."

You're only guessing here. The world could well be a simulation run by demons, who "reward" humans with extra powers whenever they (the humans) discover new false principles. Again, you're pretending that this kind of possibility doesn't exist in order to maintain the illusion that you are accessing absolute principles with your scientific theorizing.

It is important to reach 100% certainty with one's knowledge. Being satisfied with 99.99% certainty isn't good enough, which is what you are doing. In many ways, this represents the difference between the philosopher and the scientist.

Quote:

"How much of that has been generated by "toilet-bound" rationalizing?"

Philosophy deals with mental and spiritual progress and cannot be judged by the same criteria that is used to measure scientific progress. One has to step back and take in the larger picture. For example, the very emergence of science itself as a discipline of thought is a by-product of humanity's philosophical progress, as is the emergence of enlightened people, great spiritual texts, the spreading of mental clarity and rationality throughout all sectors of society, and so on.

Quote:

"When abstract paintings are reflected in mirrors

It reminds me of trees bouncing off the surface of a lake.

*And although my body cries out to dive in
My will forces my Mind to fall into itself.*

As it reels, trying to find its person,

I realize that what it truly seeks is its reflection

In an abstract painting."

It's a nice poem, but it really only reflects Kitten's desires and world-view (and perhaps yours) and doesn't relate to my own situation in any way.

Quote:

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

"I am totally going to kill the poem here, but what she's really trying to say... its cuz i know better... *laughs* an abstract painting, a beautiful artwork that is the universe has many images, which is akin to reflections of trees on the surface of a lake; and although the body yearns to live in the shadow of reality, the Mind re-

jects it realizing that what it truly seeks is its own reflection in the universe."

Ultimately, there is really no Mind, no universe, nor any reflections. One needs to go beyond all the reflections and realize this great truth.

CHAPTER V

From Andrew Beckwith

Thu Jan 01, 2004 6:36 am:

David,

Your replies are becoming incoherent. When you put in a retort that philosophers have eyes, you are neglecting that philosophers and scientists are part of the same logical tree. That of symbolic logic reasoning. Observations are the CORE of scientific methodology. That you refuse to accept this means that your methodological processes used to construct your paradigms are based upon slopism and are untrustworthy.

I am sorry it has come to this. People have very patiently tried to explain that you have an untendable starting point. Sticking your head in the sand and chanting mantras against 'bad vibes' is materially no different from an infant throwing food against the wall after the child does not get its own way. You are having a temper tantrum because the world does not confirm to your slopistic credo.

Cool off and chill out. You need to do that. Otherwise you are in a no win situation with respect to the entire bloody planet.

From David Quinn

Thu Jan 01, 2004 1:06 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

"Your replies are becoming incoherent. When you put in a retort that philosophers have eyes, you are neglecting that philosophers and scientists are part of the same logical tree. That of symbolic logic reasoning. Observations are the CORE of scientific methodology. That you refuse to accept this means that your methodological processes used to construct your

paradigms are based upon slopism and are untrustworthy."

"Observations" can either take the form of empirical testing (which is the domain of science) and logical testing (the domain of pure logic and philosophy). I gave an example of the latter in my last post to you. If you want to dispute it, then please do so with a specific argument that pertains to that example.

Nearly all of your posts are full of conventional slogans and dogmatisms and contain very little reasoned argument. You create the impression that you do little else but mindlessly repeat the scripts that you've learnt at school. You have a chance to dispell that impression by putting forward a proper analysis.

From Andrew Beckwith

Thu Jan 01, 2004 4:50 pm:

Quote:

"“Observations’ can either take the form of empirical testing (which is the domain of science) and logical testing (the domain of pure logic and philosophy). I gave an example of the latter in my last post to you. If you want to dispute it, then please do so with a specific argument that pertains to that example.”

It's not worth even answering. Your arguments are self contradictory. And your remark about absolute truths without mathematical buttressing of the premises is a non sequitor. By my standards, as a theoretical physics person, what you have said is incoherent. I am sorry you dislike it so much but that is the bottom line.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

I am a CTMU devotee. I believe that there are certain universal truths. Unlike you, I know that science is a bridge between our everyday existence to the core arguments.

If you cannot accept this, then you are no better than Christian monks who would maroon themselves in the desert sitting in some god forsaken monastery during the fifth and six centuries, AD. And less useful than they since you are a closed system.

Your rejection of scientific methodology makes your arguments slopistic, and I am tiring of pointing this out. So is the rest of NPU. And, once you loose respect by being so bull headed, it is damnably hard to regain it.

From Plato

Thu Jan 01, 2004 5:27 pm:

David, I am disappointed to say that I agree with Andy here. You are neither addressing the elementary arguments posed to you in a rigorous manner, nor posing any sufficiently developed alternative set of principles for us to latch onto. In fact, your replies contain mistakes of definitional nature. For example, you said:

Quote:

“It is a philosophical matter because the division that you make in an otherwise seamless Reality is a conceptual one and not verifiable (or falsifiable) by empirical/scientific testing.”

This shows that you have missed the entire point of our discussion. I am not dividing Reality into anything - I am looking at the various reflections or images of that reality. Thus, I said that one such image is due to our senses and the other is due to our imagination. The fact that a thing can generate an infinite number of images is a logical proposition. That does not alter the underlying singular nature of that thing in any way.

Quote:

“Translation: ‘We can imagine things.’”

Your linguistic skills are excellent, but think about what the meaning of this simple statement is. If we can imagine things that are

not found within the Sensorium or that are logically derived from anything in the Sensorium, and then verify their existence by experiment, it means that the image of reality generated by our imagination is a higher, more complete, image of reality. At least we're getting there.

Quote:

“What is higher reality? What is the difference between it and Reality?”

laughs Let's think about this logically. Either: a) You have not read the proof carefully and are therefore confused. In this case, simply read the proof over again carefully:

Perceived reality is an incomplete image that is subsumed by noetic reality. Assume there is another image that subsumes noetic reality, but is unknowable to us. Thus, the map from $R \rightarrow S(\text{Reality to Sensorium})$ is in the domain of N (noesis) that is in the domain of H (higher reality). Thus, there are objects in N that are not in P and in H that are not in N or P . Yet, since P, N, H all belong to R , objects that are in N but not in P map onto some objects in P . However, that creates an ontological inconsistency in P , that is resolvable if one identifies the corresponding object in N (i.e. existence of scientific principle is recognized due to some paradox in the Sensorium). Now, apply this to N and H . If there is an object in H that is not in N , it must be mapped to some object in N , creating an ontological inconsistency in N . However, N is ontologically consistent, thus $H = N$.

[Or] b) You have read the proof carefully, but are unfamiliar with either the style of mathematical proofs or the terminology employed. The ability to use set theory to make epistemological arguments, as Cantor did for example, was the incentive of going into this whole business with images. You assume that some other image H of reality R is possible that is more complete than N , or the (scientific) image obtained by imagination. Then you derive some property of N and show that that property is in contradiction to what we know about N . Thus, **H is impossible and N is the most complete possible image of reality, which means its isomorphic to reality.** This is my greatly simplified proof, but I greatly recommend Cantor's and Godel's work before embarking on any epistemologi-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

cal pilgrimages. The logic here is not in question (the logical postulates still have only a posteriori validity in light of the truthful nature of the scientific method). What you may question is my ability to demonstrate ontological consistency on N, but I have covered that previously.

Take Andy, for example. I don't think he thinks that N is isomorphic to reality because I recall him saying something about the limits on cognition. If limits on cognition exist, then clearly there is a whole class of objects out there that are unknowable and hence N is ontologically inconsistent and hence H exists. That's fair. We can argue that out in a rigorous scientific way without any flip flopping. You can join us too, if you promise to behave.

Quote:

"You're only guessing here. The world could well be a simulation run by demons, who 'reward' humans with extra powers whenever they (the humans) discover new false principles."

laughs harder Hey Aaron, did you know that we scientists actually serve the devil? HAHA! Maybe that's what Maxwell was talking about, huh?

[Or] <--- Which one would you like to serve, Aaron, I'm giving you the first pick!

Quote:

"For example, the very emergence of science itself as a discipline of thought is a by-product of humanity's philosophical progress, as is the emergence of enlightened people, great spiritual texts, the spreading of mental clarity and rationality throughout all sectors of society, and so on."

Yes, I believe that I have stated in my very first post here that the object of philosophy is to develop scientific methods that are congruent with the nature of human cognition. That also includes a posteriori verifiable logical postulates, formal systems, and further insight into principles discovered so far. Wow, look at that - so much for you to do! I suggest you get to it.

Quote:

"It's a nice poem, but it really only reflects Kristy's desires and world-view (and perhaps yours) and doesn't relate to my own situation in any way."

Do you always have to be such a dolt? Jeez, just say a few nice things about the poem. Noone will think less of you.

Quote:

"Ultimately, there is really no Mind, no universe, nor any reflections. One needs to go beyond all the reflections and realize this great truth."

Fasten your seatbelts everyone, cuz we're going for a ride beyond reflections, the mind and the universe, to realize a great truth *voice deepens* that you are a slave Neo, born into a prison without walls, a prison for your mind. Of course, noone can be told what the Matrix is - you have to see it for yourself! *loud rock music starts* *David wakes up from his dream* Oh, man, I thought I was the One!

From David Quinn

Thu Jan 01, 2004 8:26 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "'Observations' can either take the form of empirical testing (which is the domain of science) and logical testing (the domain of pure logic and philosophy). I gave an example of the latter in my last post to you. If you want to dispute it, then please do so with a specific argument that pertains to that example."

AB: "It's not worth even answering. Your arguments are self contradictory."

I don't believe you. Where is the reasoning to back this up?

Quote:

"And your remark about absolute truths without mathematical buttressing of the premises is a non sequitor."

I have provided an example of an absolute truth without any mathematical content. Where is your reasoning which falsifies it?

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Quote:

“Your rejection of scientific methodology makes your arguments sloppistic, and I am tiring of pointing this out.”

I have repeatedly said that I do not reject scientific methodology. Do "mega-geniuses" always have the habit of admonishing people for things they don't do?

Please stop being a condescending show-off and offer some proper arguments to back up your scripted assertions.

From Andrew Beckwith

Thu Jan 01, 2004 8:55 pm:

This logic bomb and non sequitor flame out on your part convinced me you are hopeless. Sorry, David. I regret to tell you this but I have no other conclusion I can draw.

From David Quinn

Thu Jan 01, 2004 9:25 pm:

Plato wrote:

Quote:

DQ: “It is a philosophical matter because the division that you make in an otherwise seamless Reality is a conceptual one and not verifiable (or falsifiable) by empirical/scientific testing.”

Plato: “This shows that you have missed the entire point of our discussion. I am not dividing Reality into anything - I am looking at the various reflections or images of that reality. Thus, I said that one such image is due to our senses and the other is due to our imagination.”

And I am pointing out that this is a conceptual construct on your part - and ultimately a fiction.

Our imaginations play a strong role in determining and shaping what we perceive through our senses, just as our senses play a strong role in determining and shaping what we conceptualize in our minds. You can't really pull the two realms cleanly apart, except through the contrivance of our conceptualizing.

There is nothing wrong with creating these kinds of clean-cut divisions, as long as you

keep in mind that it is a mental creation and doesn't really exist in Nature.

Quote:

DQ: “Translation: We can imagine things.”

Plato: “Your linguistic skills are excellent, but think about what the meaning of this simple statement is. If we can imagine things that are not found within the Sensorium or that are logically derived from anything in the Sensorium, and then verify their existence by experiment, it means that the image of reality generated by our imagination is a higher, more complete, image of reality. At least we're getting there.”

Yes, I know you like to believe that. But, as I've pointed out, it is an article of faith, essentially no different to the Christian belief in God.

Quote:

DQ: “What is higher reality? What is the difference between it and Reality?”

Plato: “... or b) You have read the proof carefully, but are unfamiliar with either the style of mathematical proofs or the terminology employed. The ability to use set theory to make epistemological arguments, as Cantor did for example, was the incentive of going into this whole business with images. You assume that some other image H of reality R is possible that is more complete than N, or the (scientific) image obtained by imagination. Then you derive some property of N and show that that property is in contradiction to what we know about N. Thus, H is impossible and N is the most complete possible image of reality, which means its isomorphic to reality.”

Isn't H automatically assumed by the nature of the scientific enterprise, which is the attempt to discover more than we already know? And when we do discover something new, doesn't this scientifically demonstrate the existence of H?

Furthermore, if science were to somehow develop a complete picture of Reality (which is impossible, in my view) wouldn't it mean the end of science?

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Quote:

DQ: "You're only guessing here. The world could well be a simulation run by demons, who "reward" humans with extra powers whenever they (the humans) discover new false principles."

Plato: ".*laughs harder* Hey Andy, did you know that we scientists actually serve the devil? HAHA! Maybe that's what Maxwell was talking about, huh?"

You're evading the issue - and not for the first time, either. Please show how the scenario that I paint doesn't undermine your claim that scientific theorizing can lead to absolute principles.

Quote:

DQ: "It's a nice poem, but it really only reflects Kristy's desires and world-view (and perhaps yours) and doesn't relate to my own situation in any way."

Plato: "Do you always have to be such a dolt? Jeez, just say a few nice things about the poem. Noone will think less of you."

Even if it means my being fake?

From Andrew Beckwith

Thu Jan 01, 2004 9:36 pm:

Quote:

"And I am pointing out that this is a conceptual construct on your part - and ultimately a fiction."

Garbage, David. Sophistry of the highest order. And, you know it.

From David Quinn

Thu Jan 01, 2004 10:21 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

"This logic bomb and non sequitor flame out on your part convinced me you are hopeless."

In what way have I flamed you?

Our little stoush is an interesting one to observe. I, the supposed ignorant monk from the dark ages, am challenging your religious belief in scientific materialism with reasoned argument and you, the supposed defender of rationality, are responding with the kind of dismissive responses one would expect to see from a priest or a bishop towards a heretic. The more the monk demands that the discussion embrace reasoned argument, the more dismissive the priest becomes.

The priestliness of your attitude also shines through in something you said earlier:

Quote:

"I am a CTMU devotee. I believe that there are certain universal truths. Unlike you, I know that science is a bridge between our everyday existence to the core arguements..."

This is like the pope saying that he is the intermediary between the human race and God, and that no one can approach God without going through him. With an attitude like this, it is no wonder that you have forgotten how to defend your core beliefs with reason.

From David Quinn

Thu Jan 01, 2004 10:25 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "And I am pointing out that this is a conceptual construct on your part - and ultimately a fiction."

AB: "Garbage, David. Sophistry of the highest order. And, you know it."

No, I don't know this. What is the reasoning behind your claim?

From Plato

Fri Jan 02, 2004 12:54 am:

Quote:

"And I am pointing out that this is a conceptual construct on your part - and ultimately a fiction."

Everything we deal with in philosophy or science is a conceptual construct. The ques-

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

tion is whether or not each particular construct is truthful. In this case, the distinction is absolutely certain - it is not arguable. If there are 2 apples in box A and 3 apples in box B, A and B cannot be the same box. I do not care how the two boxes are related to one another - maybe they are compartments within a single box, maybe some demon comes in every so often to transfer apples from one box to another - I don't care. It is certain that any thing can have an infinite number of images. Every person, for example, has a different perceptual image of reality. It is also certain that there is only one scientific image of reality due to human capacity for imagination, creativity and cognition. It is certain that these are different images of reality. Once again, I do not care how the two interrelate or how they influence one another. I only need to know that they are different for my proof.

Quote:

"Isn't H automatically assumed by the nature of the scientific enterprise, which is the attempt to discover more than we already know? And when we do discover something new, doesn't this scientifically demonstrate the existence of H?

"Furthermore, if science were to somehow develop a complete picture of Reality (which is impossible, in my view) wouldn't it mean the end of science?"

David, this is an ontological argument. "Ontology" is defined as "branch of metaphysics concerned with identifying, in the most general terms, the kinds of things that actually exist". Thus, the "ontological commitments" of a philosophical position include both its explicit assertions and its implicit presuppositions about the existence of entities, substances, or beings of particular kinds. Obviously, noetic reality is incomplete - there are always more principles that we can discover. Similarly, there are always more things to experience in the Sensorium. But what I am talking about here is **ontological completeness** i.e. whether or not noetic reality contains all **types** of things that exist. Let's go back to the analogy with the boxes. We have two boxes - box A contains some apples and box B apples and oranges. Neither box is full. Clearly, box B is more ontologi-

cally complete, i.e. it contains more types of fruits. The question is whether or not box B contains all types of fruits that exist or there exists some other box C which contains even more types of fruits. See how this goes?

Box A is perceived reality (P); it contains only mass-objects (other things such as space and time are both relational i.e. perceived in relation to the distribution and alteration of mass-objects). Box B is noetic reality (N); it contains universal principles (other things in scientific view are all derived in some way from a core set of universal principles). Assume now there exists another higher image of reality (H), that contains some types that are not in N. Now, look at the proof again - it's really a damn good proof and simple too.

Perceived reality is an incomplete image that is subsumed by noetic reality. Assume there is another image that subsumes noetic reality, but is unknowable to us. Thus, the map from $R \rightarrow S(\text{Reality to Sensorium})$ is in the domain of N (noesis) that is in the domain of H (higher reality). Thus, there are objects in N that are not in P and in H that are not in N or P. Yet, since P,N,H all belong to R, objects that are in N but not in P map onto some objects in P. However, that creates an ontological inconsistency in P, that is resolvable if one identifies the corresponding object in N (i.e. existence of scientific principle is recognized due to some paradox in the Sensorium). Now, apply this to N and H. If there is an object in H that is not in N, it must be mapped to some object in N, creating an ontological inconsistency in N. However, N is ontologically consistent, thus $H = N$.

Quote:

"Even if it means my being fake?"

Come now, David. We're all friends here, let's foster some comradery and team spirit. Take your armor off every now and then - I promise no one will bite your head off.

From Andrew Beckwith

Fri Jan 02, 2004 3:48 am:

Quote:

"In what way have I flamed you?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

You did not flame me. You flamed your own mind by insisting upon a course of action which puts unnecessary constraints upon your own personal deductive logical processes.

There is no question that you are intelligent. But you do not trust your own deductions. Otherwise you would not be torturing yourself defending a position you yourself have doubts about.

How about giving yourself a break? You made a mistake in your initial suppositions. Live and learn. If you do, you will become a philosopher. If you do not, you will turn yourself into a fanatic.

From Andrew Beckwith

Fri Jan 02, 2004 10:55 am:

Quote:

“With an attitude like this, it is no wonder that you have forgotten how to defend your core beliefs with reason.”

Says the person who falsely accused Plato N factorial times of making sub divisions of 'reality' when he patiently SHOWED you through examples ad nauseum that there is a general continuum between philosophy and science. You IGNORED his examples and kept on ranting as though your upset at being contradicted will make up for your starting point being BOGUS. Relax, David. It will not. You are done for.

You accused me of a lot , and of not using my head. I use my head far more than you think and I am tired of you. This will be the end result of this magnificent faux pax which has gone around and around the bend N factorial times . I am already BORED of you. You have magnificent VERBAL skills and the common sense of a dodo.

From Andrew Beckwith

Fri Jan 02, 2004 11:59 am:

David Quinn wrote:

Quote:

“You haven't dealt with my point about the possibility of the perceived universe being a simulation of some kind.”

David,

If you knew anything about biology and bio physics you would realize that this is tautological nonsense. We IMAGE through our senses and create within our minds a 'simulation' of external reality. This is reflected in our common languages and cultures. Our common language and communication is in itself a SIMULATION of reality.

It would be safe to say that our communication linkage between us is the real simulation and that what lies beyond is in many cases unknowable with our limited sensory and intellectual repertoire.

I have re read your posts this afternoon and am more and more convinced that you **KNOW** you are wrong but are too stubborn to let yourself out of the hole. If you wish to make a self made hell for yourself you are doing an excellent job of starting your quest off right

From David Quinn

Fri Jan 02, 2004 8:03 pm:

Plato wrote::

Quote:

DQ: “And I am pointing out that this is a conceptual construct on your part - and ultimately a fiction.”

Plato: “Everything we deal with in philosophy or science is a conceptual construct. The question is whether or not each particular construct is truthful. In this case, the distinction is absolutely certain - it is not arguable.”

Look at it this way:

Imagine you are having a dream in which everything behaves very differently from the norm - e.g. gravity pulls things apart instead of pulling things together, energy isn't perfectly conserved in each interaction, motion follows different rules, objects don't follow the law of least resistance, etc . Now imagine a little dream-Plato trying to formulate the scientific laws which govern this strange world; indeed, imagine that he even believes that the laws and principles he is uncovering are universal and absolute. And then, just as he arrives at them, the dream ends. You wake up and you realize that little dream-Plato's "absolute" principles weren't really absolute

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

at all. They were strictly relative and contingent to that particular dreamworld.

Now what would we make of this dream-Plato's assertion that the distinction between noetic reality and perceived reality is meaningful and real? Surely, we would laugh in his face. For we can see, from our perspective, that the noetic reality of Plato's mind was *entirely formed* by the perceived reality. For all intents and purposes, the distinction doesn't really exist at all.

In my opinion, the only meaningful distinction to make in this matter is the one between the logical realm (which is where the pure logical truths of philosophy reside) and the empirical realm (which contains the knowledge of science). This distinction is very

useful because it enables the mind to hone in on the timeless knowledge of the Infinite.

To illustrate this distinction, imagine a little David Quinn inhabiting the strange dream world that Plato was in. Imagine that this David Quinn isolates the pure logical truths of that particular world - such as all things are finite, all things are caused, all things lack inherent existence, etc. The dream then ends, automatically obliterating Plato's knowledge, but what about David Quinn's knowledge? It continues to live on. It applies just as much to the next world as it did to the dream world. Indeed, it applies to all worlds. For David Quinn's knowledge truly is universal and absolute, while Plato's knowledge is provincial and dated and ultimately insignificant.

CHAPTER VI

From Andrew Beckwith

Fri Jan 02, 2004 8:31 pm:

Quote:

"In my opinion, the only meaningful distinction to make in this matter is the one between the logical realm (which is where the pure logical truths of philosophy reside) and the empirical realm (which contains the knowledge of science). This distinction is very useful because it enables the mind to hone in on the timeless knowledge of the Infinite."

This is incoherent. It is psychobabble. Honestly, you can do better than this ! You have all sorts of **NON** defined terms. Like 'Timeless knowledge'. God, what are you doing ? It is no longer funny ! Wake up! *Timeless knowledge of the infinite* is a non sequitor if I have ever heard of one!

From David Quinn

Fri Jan 02, 2004 9:07 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

"Timeless knowledge of the infinite is a non sequitor if I have ever heard of one!"

It is the greatest knowledge in the world and known only by great thinkers, who are very rare. It is the province of genius.

The knowledge is timeless in the sense that it can never change. It doesn't matter what galaxy or universe or dimension you live in, or what species you are, or what epoch or era you happen to be born in - the knowledge is always the same. It is a knowledge which fathoms the nature of all things, and makes scientific knowledge look very small and unimportant by comparison.

From Plato

Sat Jan 03, 2004 2:19 am:

Quote:

"Imagine you are having a dream in which everything behaves very differently from the norm - e.g. gravity pulls things apart instead of pulling things together, energy isn't perfectly conserved in each interaction, motion follows different rules, objects don't follow the law of least resistance, etc. Now imagine a little dream-Plato trying to formulate the scientific laws which govern this strange world; indeed, imagine that he even believes that the laws and principles he is uncovering are universal and absolute..."

It took me considerable creative effort to generate the proof which you so conveniently

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ignored. The obvious benefit of doing that is that now I can counter all your "what if" arguments without hardly expending any effort at all. Take, for example, your latest one: "what if the physical universe as we know it is a dream". What is the fallacy of composition here? The fallacy is that in a dream state we are unconscious and thus not cognitive in the usual sense. Because we are not cognitive we fail to recognize numerous paradoxes that are presented to us and thus fail to discriminate between dream state and reality. Accidentally, this is also the manner in which any animal experiences the Sensorium. Since animals are not cognitive, they operate under the belief that the Sensorium, in whatever way each individual species experiences it, is the true reality. Needless to say that if man operated under that assumption, the human species would be long extinct.

Thus, your inquiry has to be properly restated: "what if we exist in a dream in which we are conscious and cognitive". Apply the proof that I have presented. Call P the dream world that we experience and call N a set of principles that we identify based on our existence in that dream world. Since there is an actual reality (R) that lies beyond our dream (that we can "experience" if we could somehow "wake up"), both P and N must be images of that reality that both exist in R (we physically exist in R, but due to the evil machines which have enslaved the human race can only perceive P). At the same time, both P and N must be ontologically incomplete i.e. there exist objects in R that do not exist in P and N. Since P is ontologically incomplete, objects in N would map onto P and we would recognize that our experience of the dream contain ontological inconsistencies (since we are cognitive). We would then attempt to resolve these paradoxes by hypothesizing an existence of some principle in N. However, since objects in R map onto N, N would also be ontologically inconsistent. Because of that, no matter how hard we tried to resolve the paradoxes in P by hypothesis, our efforts would be completely fruitless. Since we are cognitive, we would recognize that our scientific view of reality is not consistent and since there is really no way for us to make it consistent we would probably abandon scientific enterprise altogether and instead institutional-

ize mysticism of various sorts in hopes of one day generating a spell or potion that would enable us to wake up and experience R directly. As you can see, this does not bear close resemblance to the world we live in, which means that $N = R$ or the scientific view of reality is the true reality. No higher reality can exist.

Quote:

"It is the greatest knowledge in the world and known only by great thinkers, who are very rare. It is the province of genius."

You know, in my view, people who have that opinion of themselves are typically not of foremost mental health. I mean, there is no question that scientists who praise radical empiricism as if it were a religious doctrine are deluded. But what you are doing is flipping the empiricism/rationalism coin to the opposite side, denying empirical knowledge altogether and praising "rational" thought that is based on self-evident logical rules. You have been fooled by Aristotle, who was the foremost trickster of his day. Aristotle's whole philosophy is based on this chasm between empirical and rational thought. In doing so, he divorced that which is united in the mind, in an attempt to destroy the influence of Platonic thought. This is sophistry in a chocolate coating. True science is an art of hypothesis that uses both.

From Andrew Beckwith

Sat Jan 03, 2004 3:15 am:

Quote:

"You know, in my view, people who have that opinion of themselves are typically not of foremost mental health. I mean, there is no question that scientists who praise radical empiricism as if it were a religious doctrine are deluded. But what you are doing is flipping the empiricism/rationalism coin to the opposite side, denying empirical knowledge altogether and praising "rational" thought that is based on self-evident logical rules."

Exactly what I feared David Quinn was doing, Plato. Your namesake wrote out his

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

'republic' which was a plan for a perfect despotism. Every time a person comes up with a 'rational' deductive tautology they wind up with the blue print of something hideous. The Soviet experience during the Stalinistic phase of the great purge (1930s) lead to over 15 million deaths due to imperfect beings being sacrificed to a demented idea of a 'Soviet man'. This is partly why I resisted David Quinns abandonment of empirical knowledge. My own crucible was seeing Maos China go mad during the cultural revolution when I was a child on the outskirts looking in. The red Guards raised hell in Hong Kong riots , putting bombs on bicycles and terrorizing millions due to their abandonment of any empirical basis of their philosophical thought.

I wish Quinn luck with his life. He will need it. I have some experience with the absolute hideousness unleashed by those who sever connections with empirical knowlege, and the picture is not pretty.

From Plato

Sun Jan 04, 2004 10:31 am:

I have recently come across an excellent discussion led by Chris Langan of the questions raised here on the ISCID forums. In fact, that thread has the most number of replies on the forums illustrating just how central the issue of epistemology is to any basic science.*

Langan seems to be contradicting me in at least two points regarding the distinction between perceived and cognitive reality and the self-evidency of logical rules. Langan seems to believe that there is a universal logical syntax that is distributed over the universe for which reason CTMU must be a valid model of reality. His view is that:

Quote:

"The premises on which Rex bases his arguments are closely related. That cognitive and perceptual reality can be separated even on the logical level, that one can use logical functors and tautologies to show that logic can be inconsistent or that

there can be "alternatives" to logic, and that the truth of a logical tautology is somehow subject to empirical confirmation all lean on each other. Because none of these premises stands up, the three of them fall as one. Such argumentation is utterly indebted to logical functors and tautologies for any claim it might have to validity, and logic by definition will not permit these functors and tautologies to be used to subvert it. Only a theory of reality reflecting this incontrovertible fact can yield any amount of certainty."

My criticism of the CTMU is precisely the point argued by Rex Kerr, who seems to be in agreement with me on these issues. Kerr says:

Quote:

"My take on the irrelevance of the fundamental nature of causality to most/all biological research also leads me to my primary criticism of CTMU: it is entirely too arbitrary, in that it postulates a framework and a host of structures in order to have reality be a certain way without (insofar as I can tell) arguing that reality is or should be that way. It is, to be sure, very difficult to make a comprehensive theory that doesn't immediately fall apart at the seams under inspection, and as near as I can tell CTMU doesn't. However, being internally consistent is not the same thing as being a good model of reality."

However, it is satisfying that Langan is taking the same basic mapping approach to ontological arguments as I am doing here and in general his mode of argumentation seems sufficiently rigorous by my standards. He also seems to echo some of my concerns pertaining to biological sciences, namely our failure (or unwillingness) to conceive of a rigorous lawful basis for biological phenomena. I know that you know Langan personally, Andy, and are big fan of his work. I am wondering if you could get Langan to join us at NPU to continue this discussion. At the very least, he could take a look at my reasons for separating cognitive and perceived realities in light of my refutation of existence of any reality higher than cognitive reality and

* Here's the link: <http://www.iscid.org/ubb/ultimatebb.php?ubb=get_topic:f=6;t=000397>

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

make a reply as a guest. Personally, I am getting stale and eager for some real action. What do you think?

P.S.

Quote:

“Your namesake wrote out his 'republic' which was a plan for a perfect despotism...”

This is a typical misunderstanding of Plato's work fostered in universities today. It is not that unusual in light of the damage done to Platonic thought by people such as the late professor Leo Strauss, who act as a "trojan horse", inflicting irreparable damage to Plato's work and reputation, which two millenia of scholasticism has failed to achieve.

From Andrew Beckwith

Sun Jan 04, 2004 1:08 pm:

Quote:

“Personally, I am getting stale and eager for some real action. What do you think?”

Chris and Genie did a major relocation and moved to another area of the country. Actually they are now about four hundred miles south of where I live. I am waiting for them to finish and then I may be even invited by them to talk about certain CTMU issues. As it is, when the dust settles, I can raise the possibility of Chris debating with you in the NPU forum. It depends upon Chris's mood at the time and I cannot predict his final decision. In principle I am in favor of it.

Yes, Chris IS very complete in his logical syntax. I support his basic idea. However, where I disagree with David Quinn is that David thinks that having a logical syntax (whatever it is) is sufficient in itself. I view that you HAVE to have a bridge between it and general science, Platonius. Contrary to the view Quinn tried to project upon me, I view Philosophy as extremely important. I see no difference between good philosophy and good science.

My wife wants me to eat with her now. I will resume this later.

From David Quinn

Sun Jan 04, 2004 2:07 pm:

Plato wrote:

Quote:

DQ: “Imagine you are having a dream in which everything behaves very differently from the norm - e.g. gravity pulls things apart instead of pulling things together, energy isn't perfectly conserved in each interaction, motion follows different rules, objects don't follow the law of least resistance, etc. Now imagine a little dream-Plato trying to formulate the scientific laws which govern this strange world; indeed, imagine that he even believes that the laws and principles he is uncovering are universal and absolute...”

Plato: “It took me considerable creative effort to generate the proof which you so conveniently ignored. The obvious benefit of doing that is that now I can counter all your "what if" arguments without hardly expending any effort at all. Take, for example, your latest one: ‘what if the physical universe as we know it is a dream’. What is the fallacy of composition here? The fallacy is that in a dream state we are unconscious and thus not cognitive in the usual sense. Because we are not cognitive we fail to recognize numerous paradoxes that are presented to us and thus fail to discriminate between dream state and reality.”

You assume a lot of things here which are unproven or unfounded. Your basic position seems to be that the world cannot be a simulation because, if it were, we, as highly-conscious beings, would automatically perceive paradoxes and inconsistencies in the world.

This argument assumes a number of things which are taken on blind faith, such as:

- That the simulation will necessarily be too basic and primitive to fool us. In other words, you are ignoring the possibility, say, that the simulation has been created by highly-advanced beings who have ironed out all the inconsistencies over millions of years.

- That we are conscious and intelligent enough to perceive any inconsistencies that may exist. In other words, you are ignoring

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

the possibility that inconsistencies may exist in the world and yet be too obscure or too fine to be observed by us.

You're also ignoring the fact that there are indeed inconsistencies which we observe in the world via our current scientific understanding - e.g. the seemingly irreconcilable inconsistencies between the so-called four forces of Nature, thus preventing the formulation of a coherent Theory of Everything; the inconsistencies observed in the Big Bang model; the inconsistencies which lead to the formulation of imaginary objects such as "dark matter" and the like.

Now it is normal scientific practice to treat these observed inconsistencies as products of the current limitations of science, and not as part of the fabric of the world itself. Scientists naturally believe these inconsistencies will disappear when they acquire more observational data and further refine their theories. But there is no real certainty this will automatically happen. It may turn out that some of the the observed inconsistencies will always remain, that they really are part of the world. Who knows?

What you're doing, Plato, is treating a blind assumption made by scientists as though it were a bedrock truth - which, again, is essentially no different to what a fundamentalist Christian does.

Quote:

DQ: "It is the greatest knowledge in the world and known only by great thinkers, who are very rare. It is the province of genius."

Plato: "You know, in my view, people who have that opinion of themselves are typically not of foremost mental health. I mean, there is no question that scientists who praise radical empiricism as if it were a religious doctrine are deluded. But what you are doing is flipping the empiricism/rationalism coin to the opposite side, denying empirical knowledge altogether and praising "rational" thought that is based on self-evident logical rules."

I've said this many times already, but I do not "deny empirical knowledge altogether". I am merely putting it in its proper place.

It's not a difficult point to comprehend - even people with average IQs can compre-

hend it - and yet the pair of you are making an absolute meal of it. I put it down to the fact that you are very attached to your religion and thus feel a need to caricaturize and demonize anyone who challenges it. Just the fact that you interpret my challenge to the *status* of science in the larger scheme of things as a *complete rejection of science altogether* illustrates this. You feel a need to paint me as a kind of insane, out-of-touch-with-reality, anti-scientific, mentally disturbed fellow. It is no different to the way that the medieval Christians used to paint the courageous scientists and philosophers who challenged the central tenets of the Church as *completely immoral, devil-possessed monsters*.

Quote:

"You have been fooled by Aristotle, who was the foremost trickster of his day.

To be honest, I've never given Aristotle a single thought in my life. He's always seemed just another tedious academic to me."

From Andrew Beckwith

Sun Jan 04, 2004 2:43 pm:

Quote:

"I've said this many times already, but I do not "deny empirical knowledge altogether". I am merely putting it in its proper place."

Please do not lie. You denied its importance all together.

Quote:

"Now it is normal scientific practice to treat these observed inconsistencies as products of the current limitations of science, and not as part of the fabric of the world itself. Scientists naturally believe these inconsistencies will disappear when they acquire more observational data and further refine their theories. But there is no real certainty this will automatically happen. It may turn out that some of the ... observed inconsistencies will always remain, that they really are part of the world. Who knows?"

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

You just blew off causality. Beautiful, David. I KNEW you had it in you to do this! Create a total straw man issue which denies the fact that philosophy AND science come from the same root of human cognitive endeavors and then throw out scientific contributions to our world view. I take off my hat to you in creating a consistent picture of philosophical schizophrenia for NPU to enjoy.

Quote:

“What you're doing, Plato, is treating a blind assumption made by scientists as though it were a bedrock truth - which, again, is essentially no different to what a fundamentalist Christian does.”

Read it* if you have the guts, David. I doubt you do. Please don't cry too hard if you have your assumptions cave in on you some day in the near future with you feeling very, very foolish after you denied what was obvious to the rest of the NPU board. Saying it (what you dislike so much) is not possibly true will not make the issue go away.

From Plato

Sun Jan 04, 2004 5:38 pm:

Quote:

“- That the simulation will necessarily be too basic and primitive to fool us. In other words, you are ignoring the possibility, say, that the simulation has been created by highly-advanced beings who have ironed out all the inconsistencies over millions of years.

“- That we are conscious and intelligent enough to perceive any inconsistencies that may exist. In other words, you are ignoring the possibility that inconsistencies may exist in the world and yet be too obscure or too fine to be observed by us.”

David, with all due respect, this is becoming ridiculous. I have patiently entertained all your queries, no matter how ridiculous, with

a rigorous proof that admits no assumptions. Makes me wonder whether a rigorous proof means anything to you.

With respect to your first inquiry, I have explained the origin of inconsistencies in sense-perceived reality. We are dealing with a map from reality onto our senses ($R \rightarrow P$). Since P is ontologically incomplete, i.e. there are objects in R that do not exist in P, but P is still coherent, it must be the case that more than one object in R is mapped or projected onto the exact same object in P. This is called an **ontological inconsistency** of the type **A exists and A does not exist**. For example, imagine you have to map a flat surface onto a sphere. Try doing this at home, give yourself a little sense of what it means to live in reality. A sphere contains an existence which the surface does not contain, namely **curvature**. Thus, no matter how hard you try to make it "fit", there will always be places where it won't align and form wrinkles. These are, in essence, the inconsistencies that I am referring to. **It makes no difference who the designer of the simulation is**. Even God would be unable to make the sphere fit perfectly onto a flat plane.

With respect to your latter inquiry, the method by which we detect these inconsistencies involves formulating a set of assumptions based on the empirical data and then extending the assumptions into a theorem lattice via deduction until we come across an undecidable proposition which signals incompleteness. Incompleteness is, obviously, not caused by the deduction itself, but by the empirical assumptions which are carried over at each step. The degree of extension of the theorem lattice is directly related to the "resolution" factor or the scale at which we can detect inconsistencies. **Since any theorem lattice can be extended indefinitely by deduction, any inconsistency can be detected**. This is also a good way of judging how close to truth any formal system is. Given a set of assumptions and a set of differential equations describing a physical system empirically, how many successive derivations are necessary to generate an inconsistency? You will quickly find that with scientific progress the degree of required extension increases to the point where in some cases today, it might take a generation of scientists to pinpoint exactly where the

*

See:

<http://www.iscid.org/ubb/ultimatebb.php?ubb=get_topic;f=6;t=000397>

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

inconsistency is, another generation for everyone to accept that there is a problem, then another for some genius to figure out how to resolve it by hypothesis of principle, then another for it to be tested experimentally and then one more for everyone to finally accept it as fact (then there is a further generation when historians finally decide to call it a scientific revolution and start giving out Nobel Prizes). This means that **a) our system of knowledge is becoming increasingly more perfect and b) as time goes on we are capable of dealing with and addressing more and more minor inconsistencies.**

Quote:

“You're also ignoring the fact that there are indeed inconsistencies which we observe in the world via our current scientific understanding - e.g. the seemingly irreconcilable inconsistencies between the so-called four forces of Nature, thus preventing the formulation of a coherent Theory of Everything; the inconsistencies observed in the Big Bang model; the inconsistencies which lead to the formulation of imaginary objects such 'dark matter' and the like.”

That's precisely what I was referring to in the above paragraph. Noetic reality (N) is incomplete and will never be complete because there will always be more and more principles that we can discover. However, noetic reality is **ontologically complete**, i.e. any object that exists in true reality **can be potentially** represented as a universal physical principle in N. I have showed that in my last post, but you keep confusing the two concepts. Incompleteness means there are objects of exact same type outside of N that we just don't know about yet. For example, there are 10 mushrooms growing somewhere in the forest, but we have picked only 5 of them so far. Ontological inconsistency means there are objects of different type outside of N that we cannot possibly know about because they are not graspable by cognition. For example, there are 10 mushrooms and 10 magic mushrooms growing in the forest, but we don't know how to find the magic mushrooms (heh this is not a joke about drugs, don't get any ideas!). If N was ontologically incomplete, no scientific theory or formal system would

be **completeable at any moment in time** i.e. no matter what principle you hypothesized, **the inconsistencies could never be resolved.** Scientific method would essentially be useless. I explained that quite clearly in the previous post.

Quote:

“What you're doing, Plutonium, is treating a blind assumption made by scientists as though it were a bedrock truth - which, again, is essentially no different to what a fundamentalist Christian does.”

I have addressed and can address every single "what if" from a unified standpoint of rigorous proof. You can "what if" until you get tired of being made into an idiot in front of everyone who is reading this. I am standing on the shoulders of giants who have made scientific progress possible throughout human history, which in the long run is the **only** thing responsible for improvement of man's condition. Anything that does not have to do with science is a waste of time with respect to our continued survival and prosperity. Either go back to school, learn a few things and then we can continue this discussion or stop wasting my time and detracting me from this mission with your idle banter.

With warmest regards,
Sergei R. Doulatov

From Andrew Beckwith

Sun Jan 04, 2004 10:24 pm:

Quote:

“David, with all due respect, this is becoming ridiculous. I have patiently entertained all your queries, no matter how ridiculous, with a rigorous proof that admits no assumptions. Makes me wonder whether a rigorous proof means anything to you.”

The obvious answer is that it does not. Sergei, you have done your best and this is becoming hopeless.

From CJFreeman

Mon Jan 05, 2004 7:49 am:

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

With all due respect, gentlemen, after 7 pages, and a quiver full of semantic bantering, what have you accomplished?

From analog57

Mon Jan 05, 2004 9:14 am:

A point without another "reference" does not exist; the opposite of a thing distinguishes it from the thing itself. What is the dynamic of space-time? Is it a ratio?

When space is taken as a measure of length, space/time is the speed of light in vacuum for a photon of light:

$$\text{space/time} = c$$

Where, length = perception of separation between two reference points.

$$E = mc^2$$

$$E/\text{momentum} = E/p = c$$

$$\text{energy/momentum} = \text{space/time}$$

What is the EPR "superluminal?" connection? A shortcut through configuration space? Phase space?

A point can be defined as an "infinitesimal". The Topological spaces are defined as being diffeomorphism invariant. Intersecting cotangent bundles[manifolds] are the set of all possible configurations of a system, i.e. they describe the phase space of the system.

Potential infinity is defined as a limit via Newton's calculus, while actual infinity is a Cantorian Cardinal number, which is a Platonic form, which is also a type of potential.

[abstract representation]--->[semantic mapping]--->[represented system]

[axiomatic]--->[Isomorphism]<---

[Induction]

An abstract representation is exactly that, "abstract". It is not a space, or time, but is instead a product of consciousness, or a mental construct; topologically it is equivalent to a "point". The abstract description contains the concrete topology. Likewise, the concrete contains the abstract.

A duality?

A point contains an infinite expanse of space and time?

Could it be, that the "absolute" infinity, is actually a dimensionless point?

$$[\text{point}]/[\text{set of points}] = \text{point} ?$$

$$0/N = 0$$

Since it is possible for a "computation" to be self aware, there must be platonic forms that are types of self aware algorithms:

The description of any entity inside the real universe can only be with reference to other things in the universe. Space is then relational, and the universe, self referential. For example, if an object has a momentum, that momentum can only be explained with respect to another object within the universe. Space then becomes an aspect of the relationships between things in reality. It becomes analogous to a sentence, and it is absurd to say that a sentence has no words in it. So the grammatical structure of each sentence[space] is defined by the relationships that hold between the words in it. For example, relationships like object-subject or adjective-noun. So there are many different grammatical structures composed of different arrangements of words, and the varied relationships between them.

Language describes the universe, because the universe is isomorphic to a description on some level, and reality can only refer to itself, because, there is nothing outside of ..."total existence" which becomes equivalent to a self referential system, which must be a self aware system. Since descriptions make distinctions, or references to other entities, and distinctions are tautologically logical, [A or ~A], reality is logical, in that its contents can be described by a language. The contents within reality are distinctive entities, individually different from the others, yet consisting of the same foundational substance.

[<-{->[<-{U}->]<-{->]

Universe = Zero

On one level of stratification, two photons are separate. On another level, of stratification, the photons have zero separation.

Instantaneous communication between two objects, separated by a distance interval, is equivalent to zero separation[zero boundary] between the two objects.

According to the book "Gravitation", chapter 15, geometry of spacetime gives instructions to matter telling matter to follow the straightest path, which is a geodesic. Matter in turn, tells spacetime geometry how to curve in such a way, as to guarantee the conservation of momentum and energy. The Einstein tensor[geometric feature-description] is also conserved in this relationship between matter and the spacetime geometry. Eli Cartan's "boundary of a boundary equals zero."

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Einstein's equation basically says
Einstein Tensor [G] = Stress-Energy Tensor [T]

[spacetime geometry] determines [matter-energy's path] = geodesic.

[Matter-energy] determines [spacetime geometry] = non-Euclidean geometry.

Conservation of momentum energy is explained as an automatic consequence of the zero boundary of a boundary. Where conservation of energy-momentum means no creation or destruction of energy momentum in a 4D region of spacetime [4D cube] The integral of "creation events" i.e. the integral of d^4T for energy momentum, over the 4D region is required to be zero, and gives the conservation of momentum energy. The mathematical machinery for identically meeting the conservation laws is the boundary of a boundary equals zero.

[spacetime tells mass] \iff [geodesic path for particle] \iff [mass tells spacetime]

Waves are ripples in a basic medium. Einstein explains that the ether is unnecessary as a medium, so the ripples are vibrations of spacetime itself, if, mass-energy is a form of condensed space-time.

As the ripples intersect with each other, it becomes a domino effect with the ripples continually increasing in density. Very similar to taking a penny and doubling it as an iterative sequence.

2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, ... 2^n

Since the ripples are increasing in density they are "compressed". As spacetime becomes compressed, matter is re-configured as a balancing effect, so the force of gravity and accelerations are perceived as they presently are.

$[<->[<->[<->[U]<->[<->[<->]]]]$

The increasing spacetime density must be background independent.

Actually, spacetime does not really need to be "sliced up" in that it can proceed in discrete steps, yet, still be continuous.

[density 1] \rightarrow [density 2] \rightarrow [density 3] \rightarrow ... \rightarrow [density n]

A quote from the book "The Expanding Universe" by Sir Arthur Eddington:

Quote:

"All change is relative. The universe is expanding relatively to our common stan-

dards; our common standards are shrinking relatively to the size of the universe. The theory of the 'expanding universe' might also be called the theory of the 'shrinking atom'."

Quantum mechanics leads us to the realization that all matter-energy can be explained in terms of "waves". In a confined region (i.e. a closed universe or a black hole) the waves exist as STANDING WAVES. In a closed system, the entropy never decreases.

The analogy with black holes is an interesting one but if there is nothing outside the universe, then it cannot be radiating energy outside itself as black holes are explained to be. So the amount of information i.e. "quantum states" in the universe is increasing. We see it as entropy, but to an information processor with huge computational capabilities, it is compressible information.

Quantum field theory calculations where imaginary time is periodic, with period $1/T$ are equivalent to statistical mechanics calculations where the temperature is T . The periodic waveforms that are opposed yet "in phase" would be at standing wave resonance, giving the action.

Periodicity is a symmetry. Rotate into the complex plane and we have real numbers on the horizontal axis and imaginary numbers on the vertical axis. So a periodic function could exist with periodicity along both the imaginary AND the real axis. Such functions would have amazing symmetries. Functions that remain unchanged, when the complex variable "z" is changed.

$f(z) \rightarrow f(az+b/cz+d)$

Where the elements a,b,c,d, are arranged as a matrix, forming an algebraic group. An infinite number of possible variations that commute with each other as the function f, is invariant under group transformations. These functions are known as "automorphic forms".

Topologically speaking, the wormhole transformations must be invariant with regards to time travel. In other words, by traveling backwards in time, we "complete" the future, and no paradoxes are created.

So when spacetime tears and a wormhole is created, it must obey certain transformative rules, which probably appear to be disconti-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

nuities from a "3-D" perspective, but really, these transformations are continuous?

$$[v1+v2]/[1+v1v2/c^2]$$

$$c+c=c$$

$$\text{aleph}_0 + \text{aleph}_0 = \text{aleph}_0$$

$$0 + 0 = 0$$

Gravity exists because the information density of space-time is increasing. This creates a "pressure force" where processed space, compresses mass-energy, and mass-energy reacts by compressing space. The process is "time", which becomes dilated due to the increased information density of massive objects.

Stephen Hawking's excellent book, "Universe in a Nutshell", explains holography as a phenomenon of interference of wave patterns. Light from a laser is split into two separate beams, one bounces off the object and gets reflected onto a photo-sensitized plate. The other beam is reflected into a lens and collides with the reflected light of the object. When a laser is shone through the developed plate, a fully three dimensional image of the original object is created.

According to conventional theories, the surface area of the horizon surrounding a black hole, measures its entropy, where entropy is defined as a measure of the number of internal states that the black hole can be in without looking different to an outside observer, who can only measure mass, rotation and charge. This leads to another theory which states that the maximum entropy of any closed region of space can never exceed one quarter of the area of the circumscribing surface, with the entropy being the measure of the total information contained by the system. So the theorists came to realize that the information associated with all phenomena in the three dimensional world, can be stored on its two dimensional boundary, like a holographic image.

$$S' = S_m + A/4$$

Since entropy can also be defined as the number of states within a region of space, and the entropy of the universe must always increase, the next logical step is to realize that the spacetime density, i.e. the information encoded within a circumscribed region of space, must be increasing in the thermodynamic direction of time.

Yes Plato, entropy of thermodynamics and entropy of Shannon, are equivalent concepts,

because the number of arrangements that are counted by Boltzmann entropy reflects the amount of Shannon information needed to implement any particular combination, or arrangement. The two entropies also appear to have differences, superficially. Thermodynamic entropy interpreted in units of energy divided by temperature, while, the Shannon entropy is interpreted in terms of bits, being essentially dimensionless. The difference is a matter of convention.

From Andrew Beckwith

Mon Jan 05, 2004 10:46 am:

analog57 wrote:

"A point without another "reference" does not exist; the opposite of a thing distinguishes it from the thing itself. What is the dynamic of space-time? Is it a ratio?"

Russell. You have 100 times the basic insight of David Quinn. You can talk to you are blue in the face and the donkey will not lower himself by HIS standards to even bother to conceive that you as a person becoming literate in science have anything worth while to say.

Use your prodigious energy toward new topics. You have some promising ideas in your last post. Put them where they do not intersect with David Quinns 'world'. I guarantee you this, Russell, that if you actually got the Nobel prize that our David Quinn would deride it as philosophically trivial. I would get the same rubarb. Given this, it really is not worth your time, mine, or Platos time to try to educate a man who is convinced by his own ignorance that he is a 'genius'.

Take care, Russell. Why don't you, I , and Plutonium find a new thread to kill and burn down to bed rock? We can have fun and forget this hopeless endeavor with our self anointed philosopher king .

From Andrew Beckwith

Mon Jan 05, 2004 10:49 am:

CJFreeman wrote:

"With all due respect, gentlemen, after 7 pages, and a quiver full of semantic bantering, what have you accomplished?"

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Nothing. Nada, zero. And I am preparing to punt. I am quite content to let David Quinn be his own self annointed philosophy king in his own self made hell.

From David Quinn

Mon Jan 05, 2004 12:42 pm:

CJFreeman wrote:

Quote:

“With all due respect, gentlemen, after 7 pages, and a quiver full of semantic bantering, what have you accomplished?”

It depends on your perspective. If you're an academic, and thus regard all knowledge as a form of intellectual entertainment and all debate as a kind of sport, , then yes, all you will see in this discussion is "semantic bantering". Similarly if you're a non-intellectual who considers any kind of cerebral discussion as a form of sementic bantering. However, if you are a thinker who cares about understanding the fundamentals of existence, and who knows how to reason simply and deeply, then the discussion has accomplished at least two things:

(a) It has successfully demonstrated that "scientific materialism" - the belief that science is the highest pinnacle of human thought - has become the dominant religion of our times, and its adherents have effectively become priests and theologians.

(b) It has successfully demonstrated that fundamentalism renders all people equally stupid, regardless of their IQ. It doesn't matter how fantastic your intellect is, if you attach yourself to beliefs that have no foundations and are taken on blind faith, then your mind will automatically start to create mental blocks, blind spots, scripted responses, evasive manouvres, etc - and you effectively become no different to a Mormon or a Jehovah's Witness.

I believe it is important to publicize these facts so that young intelligent people can have some idea of what they are getting into before they decide to waste their lives joining the scientific or academic priesthoods. They need to be informed that there is a superior form of intellectualism which does lead to genuine knowledge and great wisdom. Hence my presence here.

I wonder, is there anyone on this forum who *isn't* a fundamentalist?

CHAPTER VII

From David Quinn

Mon Jan 05, 2004 1:27 pm:

Father Doulatov wrote:

Quote:

DQ: “- That the simulation will necessarily be too basic and primitive to fool us. In other words, you are ignoring the possibility, say, that the simulation has been created by highly-advanced beings who have ironed out all the inconsistencies over millions of years.

“- That we are conscious and intelligent enough to perceive any inconsistencies that may exist. In other words, you are ignoring the possibility that inconsistencies may exist in the world and yet be too obscure or too fine to be observed by us.”

FD: “David, with all due respect, this is becoming ridiculous. I have patiently en-

tertained all your queries, no matter how ridiculous, with a rigorous proof that admits no assumptions. Makes me wonder whether a rigorous proof means anything to you.

“With respect to you first inquiry, I have explained the origin of inconsistencies in sense-perceived reality. We are dealing with a map from reality onto our senses (R->P). Since P is ontologically incomplete, i.e. there are objects in R that do not exist in P, but P is still coherent, it must be the case that more than one object in R is mapped or projected onto the exact same object in P.”

Why must it be the case? Why should R (reality beyond the mind) even exist in the first place? And if it does exist, why should there be any objects in R that resemble, or have any connection to, the objects in P (perceived reality)? Once again, we have all these hidden assumptions...

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Quote:

"This is called an ontological inconsistency of the type A exists and A does not exist. For example, imagine you have to map a flat surface onto a sphere. Try doing this at home, give yourself a little sense of what it means to live in reality. A sphere contains an existence which the surface does not contain, namely curvature. Thus, no matter how hard you try to make it 'fit', there will always be places where it won't align and form wrinkles. These are, in essence, the inconsistencies that I am referring to. It makes no difference who the designer of the simulation is. Even God would be unable to make the sphere fit perfectly onto a flat plane."

And how have you established that the sphere isn't an illusion, one that is insignificant from the larger perspective? I have yet to see this from you.

Regardless of whether there are perceived inconsistencies or not, the possibility that the entire world that we experience through the senses is a simulation of some kind continues to exist. The reason I keep bringing this point up is to counter the irrational belief that science can uncover absolute principles. I would like to see you deal with this point in a simple, straightforward manner without using any symbols or academic jargon. Can you do it?

Quote:

DQ: "What you're doing, Sergei, is treating a blind assumption made by scientists as though it were a bedrock truth - which, again, is essentially no different to what a fundamentalist Christian does."

FD: "I have addressed and can address every single 'what if' from a unified standpoint of rigorous proof."

The "rigorous proofs" you have given have been evasions. Instead of discussing these matters with me in a simple, straightforward manner, like a human being, you're continually escaping into a world of pre-packaged scripts and academic wonderlands. It's quite bizarre.

Quote:

"I am standing on the shoulders of giants who have made scientific progress possible throughout human history, which in the long run is the only thing responsible for improvement of man's condition."

Your appeal to authority is noted, Father Doulatov.

Quote:

"Anything that does not have to do with science is a waste of time with respect to our continued survival and prosperity."

Ah, I see.

Quote:

"Either go back to school, learn a few things and then we can continue this discussion or stop wasting my time and detracting me from this mission with your idle banter."

No problem, Sergei. Go back to counting angels on pinheads. You obviously think it's important. I shan't hold you up any further.

From David Quinn

Mon Jan 05, 2004 1:44 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

DQ: "I've said this many times already, but I do not 'deny empirical knowledge altogether'. I am merely putting it in its proper place."

AB: "Please do not lie. You denied its importance all together."

It has minimal importance as far as comprehending Ultimate Truth is concerned, yes. But science is obviously important when it comes to creating empirical models, making predictions, manipulating Nature for our material gain, etc.

Quote:

DQ: "Now it is normal scientific practice to treat these observed inconsistencies as products of the current limitations of science, and not as part of the fabric of the world itself. Scientists naturally be-

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

lieve these inconsistencies will disappear when they acquire more observational data and further refine their theories. But there is no real certainty this will automatically happen. It may turn out that some of the observed inconsistencies will always remain, that they really are part of the world. Who knows?"

AB: "You just blew off causality. Beautiful, David. I KNEW you had it in you to do this!"

I wouldn't get too excited. In what way have I blown off causality? Please provide some reasoning.

If some devious beings causally create a simulated world which contains inconsistencies, how does that deny causality?

Quote:

DQ: "What you're doing, Sergei, is treating a blind assumption made by scientists as though it were a bedrock truth - which, again, is essentially no different to what a fundamentalist Christian does."

AB: "Read it* if you have the guts, David. I doubt you do."

I read it, but didn't see anything that applied to the discussion we are having here. Which part are you referring to exactly?

Quote:

"Please don't cry too hard if you have your assumptions cave in on you some day in the near future with you feeling very, very foolish after you denied what was obvious to the rest of the NPU board. Saying it (what you dislike so much) is not possibly true will not make the issue go away."

I have no idea what you are talking about. Does anyone speak English around here?

From Andrew Beckwith

Mon Jan 05, 2004 3:04 pm:

Quote:

"It has minimal importance as far as comprehending Ultimate Truth is concerned, yes. But science is obviously important when it comes to creating empirical models, making predictions, manipulating Nature for our material gain, etc."

Russell made a very good point which you should have talked about with him that symmetry issues and conservation laws are the underpinnings of much of what is relevant to physical inputs into key philosophical issues. In a sense they could form a hierarchy leading to an 'ultimate truth' or a philosophy construction of ideas leading to something approximating it.

However, without that bridge what you are doing is navel gazing. Since you navel gaze, I say you have blown off causality. Try to repair that omission.

Quote:

"I have no idea what you are talking about. Does anyone speak English around here?"

We can reason coherently. You cannot. Next question?

And, now for a question for you, David. Why does your genius site reek of such hate for women? It's palatable. And, it stinks. In my eyes you have taken the worst features of Greek philosophy while ignoring the spirit of open inquiry which made Athens during Pericles the worlds leader in logic.

Andrew Beckwith, PhD

From David Quinn

Mon Jan 05, 2004 7:34 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

"Russell made a very good point which you should have talked about with him that symmetry issues and conservation laws are the underpinnings of much of what is relevant to physical inputs into key philosophical issues. In a sense they could form a hierarchy leading to an 'ultimate truth' or a philosophy construction of ideas leading to something approximating it."

* See:
<<http://www.iscid.org/ubb/ultimatebb.php?ubb=gettopic:f=6;t=000397>>

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

I suppose, perhaps, it could be thought, especially with the benefit of hindsight, that the symmetry issues and conservation laws may well approximate a certain hierarchy leading to a relatively contingent version of "ultimate truth, or at least something which resembles it, depending on what terms are agreed upon by the scientific community, or at least certain elements of it. But I like what Sir Humphery Appleby had to say on the matter, when he said:

I remember the argument to the effect that, in view of the somewhat nebulous and inexplicit nature of your remit, and the arguably marginal and peripheral nature of your influence on the central deliberations and decisions within the political process, there could be a case for restructuring their action priorities in such a way as to eliminate your liquidation from their immediate agenda.

Pretty much sums it up, I would have thought.

Quote:

"And, now for a question for you, David. Why does your genius site reek of such hate for women? It's palatable."

There is no hatred for women on the Genius site, at least not from me. Where is your evidence or reasoning for this? I do think that women are significantly inferior to men when it comes to the higher activities of life, such as spirituality and philosophy, and even art and science. But in saying this, I am simply expressing the truth. There's no hatred involved.

From Kitten

Mon Jan 05, 2004 7:37 pm:

"I do think that women are significantly inferior to men when it comes to the higher activities of life, such as spirituality and philosophy, and even art and science."

Did you really say that? I'm not dreaming this ... you said that you have respect for women, and no hate of them ... then said that? David, I'm tired of beating around the bush ... I'm coming right out and saying exactly what most who have read your posts are thinking: You're a moron.

Get the fuck off our site.

From Andrew Beckwith

Mon Jan 05, 2004 8:07 pm:

Quote:

"I suppose, perhaps, it could be thought, especially with the benefit of hindsight, that the symmetry issues and conservation laws may well approximate a certain hierarchy leading to a relatively contingent version of 'ultimate truth, or at least something which resembles it, depending on what terms are agreed upon by the scientific community, or at least certain elements of it. But I like what Sir Humphery Appleby had to say on the matter, when he said:

"I remember the argument to the effect that, in view of the somewhat nebulous and inexplicit nature of your remit, and the arguably marginal and peripheral nature of your influence on the central deliberations and decisions within the political process, there could be a case for restructuring their action priorities in such a way as to eliminate your liquidation from their immediate agenda."

You BSed me both ways, David. Now let me tell you what you just did. You tried to conn a person who has studied symbolic logic all his life. You tried to back track and then you took out of context Appleby in order to save face with your cult.

You are a fraud. And, I am not amused. I have treated you with kid gloves, David, and I will take them off from now on and point out EVERY absurdity you put out. From now on I will pin every nonsensical spew you put out and the consequences be DAMNED for your reputation with that cult of yours.

Have a nice day. I hope you realize what you just did to yourself.

Andrew Beckwith, PhD

From David Quinn

Mon Jan 05, 2004 8:30 pm

Kitten wrote:

Quote:

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

DQ: “I do think that women are significantly inferior to men when it comes to the higher activities of life, such as spirituality and philosophy, and even art and science.”

Kitten: “Did you really say that? I’m not dreaming this ... you said that you have respect for women, and no hate of them ... then said that?”

I also think dogs are inferior to men when it comes to higher activities, but it doesn’t mean I hate them.

The scientific community also recognizes that genius is primarily the province of the male. A couple of years ago, the long-standing editor of *Nature* magazine (I can’t recall his name, Sir somebody or other) was asked to list what he thought was the top 50 scientists of the 20th century, as determined by the quality and magnitude of their achievements. His list naturally included the names of Einstein, Bohr, Feynman, Crick, etc, but interestingly, it also included no women. He couldn’t even find a token female to slip in.

Quote:

“David, I’m tired of beating around the bush...I’m coming right out and saying exactly what most who have read your posts are thinking:

“You’re a moron.

“Get the fuck off our site.”

Well, at least you’re speaking plain simple English. That’s something.

I can understand why you would get upset at my remarks, Kitten, but I do hope that the males on this forum, at least, will refrain from allowing their emotions to swamp their thought-processes. But I won’t be holding my breath.

From Andrew Beckwith

Mon Jan 05, 2004 8:46 pm:

Quote:

“I also think dogs are inferior to men when it comes to higher activities, but it doesn’t mean I hate them.”

David,

One last time. I am watching you in this, and I will point out your inconsistencies.

It would be better for you if you leave quietly. You cannot be this thick to maintain face for your cult.

Quote:

“I can understand why you would get upset at my remarks, Kristy, but I do hope that the males on this forum, at least, will refrain from allowing their emotions to swamp their thought-processes. But I won’t be holding my breath.”

Oh, who is losing their cool here ? Do you wish for me to point out what you did to yourself EARLIER ?

Quote:

“I suppose, perhaps, it could be thought, especially with the benefit of hindsight, that the symmetry issues and conservation laws may well approximate a certain hierarchy leading to a relatively contingent version of “ultimate truth, or at least something which resembles it, depending on what terms are agreed upon by the scientific community, or at least certain elements of it. But I like what Sir Humphery Appleby had to say on the matter, when he said:

“I remember the argument to the effect that, in view of the somewhat nebulous and inexplicit nature of your remit, and the arguably marginal and peripheral nature of your influence on the central deliberations and decisions within the political process, there could be a case for restructuring their action priorities in such a way as to eliminate your liquidation from their immediate agenda.”

Having it both ways to save face in NPU by a token back track for being wrong and then citing a not applicable quote by Appleby to save face for the back tracking in front of your cult, David ? Cute.

Really, please step on your **** again, David. I love it when you do exactly what you accuse OTHERS of doing.

From Kitten

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Mon Jan 05, 2004 8:57 pm:

Oh this was not purely emotion, believe me...you would not like to see me being an illogical, purely emotional, female. I was going easy on you in the post in politics...and purely blunt here. David, science was once a very male dominated field, much like everything else, until recently. All thanks to something called the woman's rights movement, maybe you should look that up. You compared women to dogs? I am sorry, but as a cognitive science student I can here say with confidence that a woman has many more neurological connections and synapses than a dog. And many women, it would seem, have infinitely more than you. If you take a step back and read what I posted for once, (something I've realized that you're not keen on doing referring to my last message here on Nirvana), I never said you hate women. In fact, what I posted was the complete opposite to that: you said you had NO hate of women. Very few women have entered into the field of science until recently; truthfully I do not believe a goddamn word your saying about this editor who has no name. Rosalyn Sussman, Christiane Nusslein-Volhard, Marie Curie, Ada Byron Lovelace, Maud Menton, Sophie Germain, Florence Allen, Maria Goeppert Mayer, Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin, Gertrude Elion ...and you're telling me that none of these made it onto this list of great mathematic and scientific minds of the twentieth century? You're kidding me right? Not one? What kind of a list was this again? Oh right, you don't remember who wrote it. *nods*

Yes, I did speak plain and simple English *smiles* It's the only kind you can understand.

Then again, maybe you didn't, as you read it and posted again... *shakes her head*

From David Quinn

Mon Jan 05, 2004 9:07 pm:

Andrew Beckwith, PHD, wrote:
Quote:

"You BSeD me both ways, David. Now let me tell you what you just did. You tried to conn a person who has studied symbolic logic all his life. You tried to

back track and then you took out of context Appeleby in order to save face with your cult."

I don't believe that I took Appleby's remarks entirely out of context, although it may well have turned out that way had I not quoted his remarks in italics. As it stands, however, it is my contention that the remarks were only 4, or possibly 5% out of context, which, as I'm sure you will agree, falls within the acceptable range of contextual variation, as described by Poe and Johnson in their wonderfully crisp paper, *The Inter-logical Dynamics of Contextual Variation as Applied to Statements of Empirical Possibility*. But consider what Appleby had to say on another subject:

"The identity of the Official whose alleged responsibility for this hypothetical oversight has been the subject of recent discussion, is NOT shrouded in quite such impenetrable obscurity as certain previous disclosures may have led you to assume, but not to put too fine a point on it, the individual in question is, it may surprise you to learn, one whom you present interlocutor is in the habit of defining by means of the perpendicular pronoun."

You can't say that I quoted him out of context here, surely.

From Andrew Beckwith

Mon Jan 05, 2004 9:09 pm:

Now I will be to the point. B.S. Pure and simple. Sorry, David.

From Kitten

Mon Jan 05, 2004 9:11 pm:

cracks up laughing *falls to her knees pointing at Quinn* *giggles hysterically* *takes a deep breath, calms down, and stands up* He told you Quinn! And he won't stop pointing out your flaws, which appear in EVERY post! *heh*

From analog57

Mon Jan 05, 2004 9:26 pm:

David Quinn wrote:

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

"I remember the argument to the effect that, in view of the somewhat nebulous and inexplicit nature of your remit, and the arguably marginal and peripheral nature of your influence on the central deliberations and decisions within the political process, there could be a case for restructuring their action priorities in such a way as to eliminate your liquidation from their immediate agenda."

Pretty much sums it up, I would have thought.

The categorical representation of a propositional conundrum, in which deductive invalidity depends on the modality of the truth conditionals concerning the prerequisite of the contingent assumption and consequent conclusion. The totally relevant content of the assumption and conclusion, definitely contains no modal terms. But, the modality attaches to the fact that the conditional assumption is quite possibly true, while the conditional conclusion is necessarily false.

Which leads us to an argumentational representation of a completely non-bogus modal formulation of the paradox of existence itself, and, the oh so elusive "ultimate truth" that DQ earnestly seeks but apparently has not the cerebral fortitude, or courage, to follow it to the ultimate conclusion of conclusions. Deductive invalidity is most excellently predicated on the categorical truth of the modal-term-laden assumption and the definitive categorical falsehood of the modal-term-laden conclusion. Hence, the assumption is, such, that if the antecedent of a contingently true conditional is false, then, the consequent of the conclusion can be true is itself quite simply and most elegantly ...true. Therefore, the conclusion that if it is not the case that the consequent of a contingently true conditional can be true, then it is not the case that the antecedent of the true conditional is false, is itself quite simply, false.

Meta-philosophical scruples notwithstanding, existence is, a paradox.

Alpha = Omega

It is the categorical formulation of the simultaneous, situational, instantiated contra-

diction, where deductive invalidity is the product of the utmost categorical truth of the assumption that if the antecedent of a true conditional is false, then the consequent of the conditional is true or false indifferently, and of the categorical falsehood of the conclusion consequently predicates that if it be not the case that the consequent of a true conditional is true or false indifferently, then, it is not the case that the antecedent of the conditional is false. To pronounce the consequent of a true conditional as being true or false indifferently is tantamount to saying modally that where the antecedent of a true conditional is notoriously false, then the consequent can, or could be, or is, possibly true or false. But it may be worthwhile to see that the definitive, simultaneous equality of both true, and false, can be formulated without explicitly including modal terms, which become the predicated operators, which, for the sake of showing that the consequent paradoxical conundrum is not straightforwardly resolvable by appealing to concrete philosophical scruples concerning the intentionality of predicated modal contexts.

From David Quinn

Mon Jan 05, 2004 9:31 pm:

Kitten wrote:

Quote:

"What kind of a list was this again? Oh right, you don't remember who wrote it. *nods*"

I managed to track down his name:

Sir John Maddox, editor of Nature magazine from 1966-73 and 1980-95, was recently asked to compile a list of the 10 greatest scientists of this century - defined in terms of making the most significant breakthroughs or the greatest impact upon their particular field of research. His pick:

1. Albert Einstein
2. Ernest Rutherford
3. Emil Fischer
4. Paul Dirac
5. Werner Heisenberg
6. Linus Pauling
7. Richard Feynman
8. Francis Crick
9. Hermann Muller

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

10. MacFarlane Burnet

He also provided a list of the next best 10 (ranked in no particular order):

Neils Bohr
Erwin Schrodinger
Charles Sherrington
Louis Leakey
Fred Hoyle
Steven Weinberg
Edwin Hubble
Wolfgang Pauli
Jules Poincare
Harry Hess

Note that there is not a single woman named in either of these two lists.

Other names that John Maddox considered, but eventually discarded, include: Howard Florey, Robert Robertson, Peter Mitchell, Alan Turing, Otto Hahn, Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, Robert Edwards, Stanley Cohen, Fred Sanger, Kamerlingh Onnes, Arnold Sommerfield, Arthur Compton, San Goudsmit, George Uhlenbeck, Carl Anderson, Ernest Chadwick, Hans Bethe, Eugene Wigner, and Edward Teller. Again, there is not a single woman in this group.

In my view, this illustrates very clearly that while women are capable of being competent scientists and can even make some significant breakthroughs if they happen to be in the right place and the right time, they are unable to rise to the level of genius required to really expand the frontiers of science. And when you consider that scientific genius is actually a far weaker and more diluted form of genius than philosophical genius, it also illustrates just how far away women are from enlightenment.

Quote:

“David, science was once a very male dominated field, much like everything else, until recently. All thanks to something called the woman’s rights movement, maybe you should look that up.”

The list by Maddox indicates that the woman’s movement has failed thus far to produce female scientific geniuses of any note, despite a century of women entering universities and becoming scientists.

Quote:

“You compared women to dogs?”

No, I compared my dispassionate attitude towards dogs with my dispassionate attitude towards women.

From David Quinn

Mon Jan 05, 2004 9:56 pm:

analog57 wrote:

Quote:

“It is the categorical formulation of the simultaneous, situational, instantiated contradiction, where deductive invalidity is the product of the utmost categorical truth of the assumption that if the antecedent of a true conditional is false, then the consequent of the conditional is true or false indifferently, and of the categorical falsehood of the conclusion consequently predicates that if it be not the case that the consequent of a true conditional is true or false indifferently, then, it is not the case that the antecedent of the conditional is false. To pronounce the consequent of a true conditional as being true or false indifferently is tantamount to saying modally that where the antecedent of a true conditional is notoriously false, then the consequent can, or could be, or is, possibly true or false. But it may be worthwhile to see that the definitive, simultaneous equality of both true, and false, can be formulated without explicitly including modal terms, which become the predicating operators, which, for the sake of showing that the consequent paradoxical conundrum is not straightforwardly resolvable by appealing to concrete philosophical scruples concerning the intentionality of predicated modal contexts.”

I couldn't agree more. Very well put.

CHAPTER VIII

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

From Kitten

Mon Jan 05, 2004 10:31 pm:

I think analog is right, Alpha=Omega, and David needs a lesson in logic. Maybe we should give him a lesson in logistics guys, but he does seem to be a lost cause. *turns to David* If you need such a lesson, you only need to ask, and any one of us could post such a lesson. I believe it was my lesson to pre-adolescent children on this very subject, on bookrags.com, which caught Coyote's attention. *laughs*

"To pronounce the consequent of a true conditional as being true or false indifferently is tantamount to saying modally that where the antecedent of a true conditional is notoriously false, then the consequent can, or could be, or is, possibly true or false." Think about what he's saying here David, think it over carefully...and write more than "well put."

Maddox, yes he is a brilliant man. I saw him speak at McGill two years ago about the direction of science, and where it's leading us. However, as to the list...I see one chemist, one biologist...*looks* a geneticist, a physiologist, and the rest are physicists. Honestly, this answer was given to a question at the lecture I attended: "If you had to choose your personal favourites, out of all available scientists, who would they be?" Hmmm...a little different than the question you claimed he answered. And you said previously that he "was asked to list what he thought was the top 50 scientists," back-track some more Dave...

Truly women are not as appreciated in science as they should be, and there have, as you said, been notoriously few in the field.

"The list by Maddox indicates that the woman's movement has failed thus far to produce female scientific geniuses of any note," HELLO!?: Rosalyn Sussman, Christiane Nusslein-Volhard, Marie Curie, Ada Byron Lovelace, Maud Menton, Sophie Germain, Florence Allen, Maria Goeppert Mayer, Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin, Gertrude Elion...did you miss them the last time David? Because there they are in print again...look them up, you can find most of them in books describing women who won the Nobel Prize for science or math!!!

"I compared my dispassionate attitude towards dogs with my dispassionate attitude towards women." *shakes her head* you're an idiot!

Personally, I'd like to see you answer with some accuracy on what Avalon is saying without quoting another, or cutting and pasting from someone else's website. He's suggesting a logical conversation on the topic you desire to speak so gallantly of! Perhaps you, a male, know little of logic, math, or science? *giggles*

Lastly:

Get the fuck off our site ... to which you posted a reply,

No REALLY, shut up and get the fuck off our site...to which you replied again...

One more time, extended version:

You are an egotistically dense, (that means in simple terms: neurologically equivalent to a flea), pitiful excuse for a human being...not pitiful excuse for a man, but the entire human race David.

Shut up, go home to mommy, and never come back...or do us the favour and jump off a cliff. *rolls her eyes* I'm not wasting time on this anymore, I said what I need to say under an entire post dedicated to your flawed person, you can find it under "Politics," I'm going to bed...so enjoy the last word. Quite frankly I don't care, and I refuse to respond to a person with obvious stunted emotional, spiritual, and mental growth...and that says a lot coming from a 19 year old.

So, does it hurt to get beat up by a girl? *laughs* Let's compare cock size, I bet mine's bigger than yours! *cracks up*

You're a moron.

Get the fuck off our site.

grins

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Jan 06, 2004 4:00 am:

David,

I will put a challenge to you right here. I have toured your Genius site extensively. Now, I will propose the following:

Make me a contributor to that site **for a one week period**. IF you are not afraid of debate there, I will gladly stunt that place

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

upside down. And at the least I will help you cease putting up such abortions as what you did below. I doubt you could stand it. Coyote is a brilliant man but he does not have my devil take care credo and my willingness to go for broke. Warning, **if** you take me up on this, **I will blow the joint apart**. I am QUITE capable of it, too. You have never seen me in action in a flame war. I am quite restrained in High IQ land sites. It is quite another matter when I let my inner ape show and go wild.

Quote:

"I couldn't agree more. Very well put."

As I said, David, you really outdid yourself today. You blindly agreed to Russell when if you read what he said, it demolished you. Gads, this is getting WEIRD.

And, I have been through discussions about Feminine contributions to science already in other lists I am part of. You support science in THIS situation in order to put Kelly down, but you also TRASH the importance of Science itself.

Quote:

"And when you consider that scientific genius is actually a far weaker and more diluted form of genius than philosophical genius, it also illustrates just how far away women are from enlightenment."

Yeah, right. And how is it, Mastermind, that Einsteins relativity had more oomph in terms of re adjustment of BASIC deterministic philosophical crack pot thesis's like yours than any counter veiling ranting by a bogus 'philosopher' like yourself ? You really screwed up, David.

David, you cannot win. Saying something is so when people need to sleep will not preforce dominate what is said in a journal abstract. Remember, David, it is not the person who talks the loudest or who stays up all hours of the night as you do to shout down others in a cult style who is remembered for posterity. I had my encounter with Moonies and It is really easy for me to predict what you will do .

1) Write realms of nonsense so as to tire out opponets

2) When put with your back against the wall, tepidly agree to what you think an ally says, even if it demolishes your premises

3) Use false analogies in order to tie up debaters with trivial details **in order to go to :**

4) The big lie to wow the masses, which you ironically openly despise.

Joseph Gobbels and Joe McCarthy used these four principles , David. Relax though, you are neither of these two historical examples. You are merely pathetic.

Your buddy, Drowden, put in the following rant in on your misnamed 'genius' site

Quote:

"The feminine/masculine debate is all about consciousness. The path to enlightenment is explicitly about heightening of consciousness. The feminine dimension of mind represents the unconscious part of ourselves - the spontaneous, the immediate and emotional, the unreflective. The fact of it being a barrier to the pursuit and attainment of enlightenment seems prima facie obvious to me.

"Enlightenment if the complete absense of all delusion, not just the big delusions, not just the ones that make us suffer, but all deluded concepts. Part of the process by which one casts off these delusions is an examination of human consciousness, in every sense. This means looking at the masculine and feminine, the passive and the dominant, the rational and the emotive, the willful and the merely willing, right down to the last detail. This much ought be obvious. However, it seems that some would have us exclude the feminine from this process, for reasons which make it all the more important to scrutinise. Now, some will say that there is a difference between analysing the feminine and taking the extra step of rejecting it. Yes, there is a difference, but when one understands the feminine one automatically takes the step of rejection, because one sees clearly the dangers of it in the context of the pursuit of wisdom. And this is the key, the context. For someone with different values (that is, other than striving for wisdom) scrutinising the concept Woman, would possibly be a meaningless thing to do, and even perhaps a counter-productive thing to do, especially if one is

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

interested in relationships and sex. But striving for wisdom is no ordinary thing. It demands an inordinate degree of character, of courage, of will, and the readiness to put aside attachments however pleasurable they may have been. It demands an inordinate degree of honesty."

And, my wife who works in Proton source in Fermi laboratory will laugh at your sites sorry tautological put down of women. Sorry , David, but she is both feminine and also ON THE FRONT LINES creating something very new and vital.

And, now what about your reply in your sites Genius forum thread "I dare you "? :

Quote:

"Basically, you make the mistake confusing the flowy, all-over-the-place consciousness found in very feminine people with the freedom and non-duality of enlightenment. You haven't conquered your ignorance via profound reasoning. Instead, you've cunningly developed a habit of evading it by reducing your consciousness to that of a feminine person. By plunging yourself into extreme changeability and inconsistency you are able to succeed in driving all awareness of your ignorance out of your mind, together with its attendant sufferings. But alas, the ignorance can still be perceived by others..."

Oh, so all fault comes from the feminine side of life ? Yeah, rocket scientist! This is great.

You are hopeless. Get a life. You need it. If you have any guts, let me see if I can , with Coyote, kick a little LIFE into your site. If not, well then we know what closed minds can do. Sensory deprivation makes people go insane you know.

From analog57

Tue Jan 06, 2004 7:11 am:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

"Warning, if you take me up on this, **I will blow the joint apart.** I am QUITE capable of it, too."

I agree, yes, Dr. Beckwith has the talent and the knowledge, to back it up...

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Jan 06, 2004 7:25 am:

Lets do it together, Russell. Make it a JOINT proposition to David and see if the coward is man enough to allow a bit of non standard thinking to come to the fore.

From analog57

Tue Jan 06, 2004 8:28 am:

If your goal is to "change minds" at the genius forum, it could be a very difficult task Dr. Beckwith.

But your, and others, exposition of the dangers of tautological thinking has been very helpful, to me at least.

David Quinn wrote:

"I regard most of you to be quite, quite mad. And no doubt, in turn, most of you will come to see me as an ignorant simpleton."

Is this prophesy coming true?

David, I salute you...

Diversity is the rule, not the exception... Genius is more than inventing "ultimate truths"

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Jan 06, 2004 8:37 am:

Let him have his delusions, Russell. Madness is ALWAYS in the eyes of the beholder.

From analog57

Tue Jan 06, 2004 8:47 am:

The world views a person as being "mad" and the person views the world as the same. Relativity, though not in the Einsteinian sense...

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Jan 06, 2004 9:00 am:

Damn right, Russell. This is right on the money.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

From M

Tue Jan 06, 2004 11:00 am:

analog57 wrote:

"The world views a person as being 'mad' and the person views the world as the same. Relativity, though not in the Einsteinian sense."

I see most as insane. Better word is irrational. Perhaps more than a matter of uncontrollable emotions...let's not enter into gender inequality debates.

From David Quinn

Tue Jan 06, 2004 4:46 pm:

Andrew Beckwith wrote:

Quote:

"David,

"I will put a challenge to you right here. I have toured your Genius site extensively. Now, I will propose the following:

"Make me a contributor to that site for a one week period. IF you are not afraid of debate there, I will gladly turn that place upside down. And at the least I will help you cease putting up such abortions as what you did below. I doubt you could stand it. Coyote is a brilliant man but he does not have my devil take care credo and my willingness to go for broke. Warning, if you take me up on this, I will blow the joint apart. I am QUITE capable of it, too. You have never seen me in action in a flame war. I am quite restrained in High IQ land sites. It is quite another matter when I let my inner ape show and go wild'."

I'm not interested in having a flame war with you. A down-to-earth rational discussion with a fellow human being would do me.

You are welcome onto the Genius Forum, but I should warn you that any attempt to sabotage it with realms of mindless rantings won't be tolerated for every long.

Quote:

DQ: "I couldn't agree more. Very well put."

AB: "As I said, David, you really outdid yourself today. You blindly agreed to Russell when if you read what he said, it demolished you. Gads, this is getting WEIRD."

You're forgetting that my quotes from Sir Humphery Appleby answered his points with remarkable lucidity.

Quote:

"You support science in THIS situation in order to put Kelly down, but you also TRASH the importance of Science itself."

It's all relative. Science probably requires a bit more genius than, say, born-again Christianity, at least in its higher echelons, but it is nothing compared to the levels of genius that are required for top-level philosophical work.

Richard Dawkins is a great genius compared to a Billy Graham, but a mere insect compared to a Chuang Tzu or a Soren Kierkegaard.

Quote:

DQ: "And when you consider that scientific genius is actually a far weaker and more diluted form of genius than philosophical genius, it also illustrates just how far away women are from enlightenment."

AB: "Yeah, right. And how is it, Mastermind, that Einsteins relativity had more oomph in terms of re adjustment of BA-SIC deterministic philosophical crack pot thesis's like yours than any counter veiling ranting by a bogus 'philosopher' like yourself ? You really screwed up, David."

Einstein's work made *no impact at all* on philosophy. Not even a little bit. You're dreaming if you think that a scientist can make any contribution or dent to the philosophical knowledge of a wise man.

A Buddha looks upon the theorizing of scientists as he does upon the chirpings of grasshoppers - with laughter and kindly benevolence.

Quote:

"David, you cannot win. Saying something is so when people need to sleep will not preforce dominate what is said in a

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

journal abstract. Remember, David, it is not the person who talks the loudest or who stays up all hours of the night as you do to shout down others in a cult style who is remembered for posterity."

I'm sure it doesn't require a massive IQ to work out that, living in Australia, my time zone is very different to yours.

In any case, you could always wait until morning before reading my posts. They won't run away.

Quote:

"And, my wife who works in Proton source in Fermi laboratory will laugh at your sites sorry tautological put down of women. Sorry, David, but she is both feminine and also ON THE FRONT LINES creating something very new and vital."

Good for her. I've already acknowledged that women can be competent scientists and can even make significant breakthroughs on occasion. They'll never reach the heights of genius, though, not without significant genetic modification.

From Kitten

Tue Jan 06, 2004 4:59 pm:

walks into the library to grab a book off the shelf, and overhears the comment

mumbles: You refuse to get into a cock fight with anyone, for obvious reasons *Finds the book and passes the group to head into the math forum* *whispers to Andy: "I can think of at least one person in this room needing gene therapy" *giggles* "and a cock transplant."* *Andy whispers something about him not needing gene therapy but a lobotomy, and she giggles* *exits the room, then pokes her head back in* "Oh and Andy, don't forget to mention that we don't put up with mindless rantings either...which is why he was asked to leave politely, then bluntly, then slowly, then had it spelt out on a chalkboard for his benefit! *sighs* And, he still cannot get it through his head! *she laughs and closes the door*

From Andrew Beckwith

Tue Jan 06, 2004 5:08 pm:

Quote:

"You are welcome onto the Genius Forum, but I should warn you that any attempt to sabotage it with realms of mindless rantings won't be tolerated for every long."

I don't rant. I tell the truth. That will serve my purposes . Nothing else needs to be done.¹¹⁵

“THE LIMITATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTELLIGENCE” (2004)

Reflections upon my lynching at Ne Ultra Plus and an analysis of the psychology of academic intellectuals.

I could see from the beginning, even before I began posting, that it was not a suitable forum for spiritual and philosophical discussion. Although Ne Plus Ultra promotes itself as an exclusive, invitation-only forum for highly intelligent, creative people, the intelligence and creativity on display was of a very narrow kind. The discussion threads were dominated by MENSA-type personalities who like to write in convoluted, hyper-complex sentences about issues that generally have little connection with reality. They were extremely academic in their mode of thought, as well as ultra-scientific in that peculiarly shallow American way. They displayed little or no capacity for deeper modes of thought and, as far as I could see, no interest in wisdom. The signs didn't look good.

No doubt this explains why my colleague, Dan Rowden, only contributed a couple of token posts during the entire affair, even though he too received an exclusive invitation from Tommy Smith, the forum owner. He took one look at the forum, concluded it was an insane asylum and felt no inclination to write. I didn't really blame him, because that was my initial reaction as well.

There is something very Pythonesque about academics with high IQs. It is the way they need to inject spectacular, over-the-top mental pyrotechnics into everything they do, regardless of whether or not it is warranted, combined with an inability to discriminate between what is important and fundamental to an issue and what is not. Thus, we have the image of a pompous know-all who, even while continuing to pour forth tortuous lines of hyper-complex reasoning, doesn't know how to resolve even the simplest of problems, and ends up losing himself further and further into the labyrinths of academic madness.

As if to illustrate this point, there was an amusing incident during the discussions at Ne Plus Ultra in which I translated, just for fun, a needlessly complex paragraph by Sergei (Plato) into a short sentence of four words:

Plato: “Obviously we must use observations or the objects in perceived reality as a stepping stone because we cannot “sense” Reality with our minds. But it is fallacious to think cognition can only make (logical) inferences from those observations. If the only statements that could be made based on perceived reality were of logical (inductive/deductive) nature, then the noetic reality would fundamentally be constrained to operate within the bounds of perceived reality and your point that there is no difference between the two would be quite valid. However, that is clearly not so because cognition allows generation of propositions which are illogical. These hypotheses, therefore, can introduce thought-objects into noetic reality that lie outside of perceived reality.”

David Quinn: “Translation: We can imagine things.”

This is by no means an isolated example. Most arguments put forward by academics, especially within the philosophic tradition, are needlessly expressed in hyper-complex language. In some of the more technical areas of academia, such as

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

those found in physics and mathematics, you do need a specialized language, but for general philosophical purposes you don't. Simple sentence structures and jargon-free language are perfectly adequate for the task. Not only do they not interfere with our ability to solve philosophic problems, but they actually make it a good deal easier. But the academic intellectual of high IQ wouldn't be able to cope with this at all. He instinctively equates intelligence with complexity of thought and expression, and imagines genius to be the ability to master ultra-complexity. To reduce everything down to the simplicities of everyday language would be, for him, to reduce the very importance and intellectual loftiness of his life as a thinker. It would literally rob him of his identity. Since he does not have the capacity to engage in simple reasonings and discern truth, he would reveal himself to be just another incompetent philosophic thinker, no different from anyone else in the community.

Because of this, the academic intellectual of high IQ has no trouble convincing himself that any attempt to solve issues and uncover fundamental truths is a complete waste of time. What he wants, always, is ever more complexity. More puzzles, more questions, more intricacies, more opportunities to throw himself into the labyrinth of academia. In this way, every neuron in his brain can be filled up with mountains of useless facts and complicated reasonings, and he can avoid having to face reality.

I have long held the view that the main purpose of academia is to act as a refuge for highly-intellectual people to prevent them from going mad. If it wasn't for the endless array of trivial puzzles that constitutes academia, the brain of the intellectual would automatically begin to wander down the pathways towards a deeper comprehension of Reality and thus towards a great deal of personal suffering and danger. Indeed, the individual in question wouldn't be able to stop himself. His high IQ brain has far too much energy and drive. It is always seeking puzzles to solve, regardless of how trivial or serious their nature. His only course of action, then, is to constantly distract his brain with countless meaningless crossword puzzles. Such is the life of an academic.

One of the interesting things that the Ne Plus Ultra incident revealed is that although a person with a high IQ might be very intelligent when it comes to academic issues, his intelligence very quickly deserts him whenever real-world issues are touched upon, or issues that affect him personally and emotionally. The participants on the Ne Plus Ultra forum repeatedly demonstrated they were unable to grasp even the simplest logical points put to them during my various discourses – even though they were points that a ten-year-old child could easily understand. There were two classic examples of this during the NPU fracas, which I will now analyze:

The first concerned my comments that science possesses limitations and cannot yield absolute truth. Although I made it very clear that I thought science had its place in society, that it was an excellent method for gaining empirical knowledge, the NPU forum members consistently interpreted my approach as a blanket attack upon the whole of science. Indeed, they concluded that I was advocating a complete rejection of science altogether.

Why such a moronic response, you might ask? I think it is mainly due to their unquestioning belief that science is wholly beyond criticism, especially as far as the acquisition of knowledge is concerned. To them, any kind of attack on science, no matter how insignificant or minor, is unthinkable. Society has inculcated them with

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

the belief that science is the be-all and end-all of knowledge and the highest of all things, and they literally cannot comprehend how any intelligent being could question it. It is like questioning the existence of gravity, or that the earth is round. Only a complete madman or a religious kook could possibly do it. And so it has become natural for them to instantly dismiss all challengers in this mindless manner, regardless of the quality of the challenge.

A large part of the problem stems from the fact that people with high IQs tend to be very enclosed and insular. They usually prefer to work and socialize with their own kind only, and thus they rarely have to confront any serious challenges to their core beliefs. In many ways, they are no different to the person who is born and baptized a Christian, raised by a Christian family, works within a Christian culture, and never once thinks to question this state of affairs. They are fundamentalists, not of Christianity, but of the religion of scientific materialism, which has as its core tenet the belief that the scientific method is the only valid method of acquiring knowledge. This brand of fundamentalism has become a very serious problem in the world today as far as wisdom is concerned, as serious and problematical as Christianity was in the Middle Ages.

The second example concerns the infamous “women and dogs” remark that I made during the second half of the discussion. It was this remark which triggered the avalanche of animosity towards me and eventually led to the hysterical demands to have me removed from the forum. That these people completely misinterpreted the comment goes without saying. Note the context in which it was made:

Andrew Beckwith: “Why does your genius site reek of such hate for women ? It's palatable.”

David Quinn: “There is no hatred for women on the Genius site, at least not from me. Where is your evidence or reasoning for this? I do think that women are significantly inferior to men when it comes to the higher activities of life, such as spirituality and philosophy, and even art and science. But in saying this, I am simply expressing the truth. There's no hatred involved.”

Kitten: “Did you really say that? I'm not dreaming this...you said that you have respect for women, and no hate of them...then said that?”

David Quinn: “I also think dogs are inferior to men when it comes to higher activities, but it doesn't mean I hate them.”

Kitten: “You compared women to dogs?”

David Quinn: “No, I compared my dispassionate attitude towards dogs with my dispassionate attitude towards women.”

[Cue hysteria]

Again, the point I was making was abundantly clear. My judgment that women are seriously disadvantaged when it comes to philosophy, wisdom and science is no more an expression of hatred towards women than is my judgment that dogs are incapable of wisdom an expression of hatred towards dogs. It is a very easy point to grasp. Who could possibly misunderstand it? No one above the age of ten, you would think. And yet somehow, a group of academic intellectuals with stupendously high IQs weren't able to fathom it at all.

Admittedly, my choice of the word “dogs” didn't help matters. If I had compared my indifferent attitude towards women with, say, my indifferent attitude towards tree or cats, the members of Ne Plus Ultra may not made such a big fuss. Even though my point would be unchanged, it is likely they wouldn't have been so

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

offended. In hindsight, I should have known that linking women to dogs, no matter how tenuously, automatically invites trouble. It is a sexually-loaded term and expresses a far worse crime than merely thinking women are incapable of wisdom. It suggests - horror upon horror - that women are sexually repulsive. If I had made reference to cats (which are graceful and cute), instead of dogs (which are hairy and smelly), the lynch mob may not have been formed at all.

No matter! The fact still remains that the forum members' strong attachments and emotions seriously undermined their ability to reason coherently. This raises an interesting issue, one that has many ramifications. Imagine if IQ tests were composed, not of trivial academic puzzles, but of real-life puzzles such as the two examples I gave above. It is not difficult to see that people's scores would be very different. The test might look like this, of example:

Q23: When a philosopher affirms the usefulness of science in the empirical realm, and yet articulates its limitations when it comes to ultimate knowledge, is he:

(a) rejecting science altogether as a tool of knowledge?

Or

(b) describing the relative worth of science as he sees it?

--

Q57: When a philosopher compares his dispassionate attitude towards women with his dispassionate attitude towards dogs, is he:

(a) comparing women to dogs?

Or

(b) comparing his own emotional attitude towards women and dogs?

Given that the academic intellectuals at Ne Plus Ultra totally flunked out with these two questions, we can only infer that they would do very poorly in an entire test of this kind. Their IQ scores would thus drop dramatically. They would be considered among the least intelligent in the community.

This suggests that IQ tests, as they are currently structured, are unreliable and wholly inadequate to measure intelligence. At best, they merely measure the raw intellect of a person, and perhaps his level of education, and not much more. They do not address his character, or his level of detachment, or his ability to apply his intellect in intelligent ways under emotional stress. Thus, we often find that those who are judged to have high IQs by the current methods of measurement have a very narrow form of intelligence, one that is strictly confined to being able to solve academic puzzles and the like. These kinds of people often give the appearance of being autistic to a degree, akin to the idiot savant who can do astonishingly complex arithmetic in his head and yet is barely able to deal with reality on any other level. IQ testing has, in many ways, become a measurement of "freakhood", rather than of intelligence. As a society, we need to rethink our premises with regards to IQ testing and devise more appropriate forms of measurement.

Related to this issue is the devastating effect that emotions and attachments have upon one's ability to reason. I made mention of the fact during the discussion at Ne Plus Ultra that fundamentalism renders all of its adherents equally stupid, regardless of how high their IQs are. Not only is this very true, but it is also incapable. A strong attachment to a blind belief automatically puts one in the position of having to defend the indefensible, which is a form of madness. It doesn't matter how great your intellect is, you will never be able to rationally support an irrational belief. Not even a genius can do it. So if a fundamentalist wants to maintain his

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

attachment to his blind beliefs, he has no choice but to erect large mental blocks, hone his skills in evasiveness and generally put a halt to any rational thought-process that even looks like heading in the direction of his beliefs. That is to say, he has to become mentally stupid. There were many examples of this process on the Ne Plus Ultra forum, wherein its members allowed their strong attachment to science, academic knowledge and women to undermine their intellectual ability to reason.

Another interesting characteristic of the academic intellectual is his habit of confining his reasoning skills to academic matters only, leaving the rest of his life almost untouched by logical thought. A kind of split-personality emerges, where, on the one hand, the academic is sober, clear-sighted, and highly logical when it comes to his academic work, but as soon as he leaves his office or turns his attention to non-academic issues, his reasoning skills abruptly go out the window and he suddenly transforms into an emotional, flaky, loopy kind of person who gullibly believes all sorts of irrational nonsense and can barely string two coherent sentences together.

One observes this stark duality in academics the world over, and it is no different with the inhabitants on the Ne Plus Ultra forum. Andrew Beckwith, for example, exhibits this trait markedly. A theoretical physicist by trade, he is a person who appears very knowledgeable, authoritative and clear-sighted whenever he operates in the mode of an academic. Although we are currently not able to witness him in this mode (since they have closed the forum to outsiders), I can assure the reader that he really does come across as a sophisticated, cultured, well-read man of science who commands respect from other academics. But as soon as you take him out of this mode, such as what happened during our little stoush on the forum, he becomes a completely different person. Phroosh! Gone is the ability to reason in a coherent manner; gone are the listening skills which are so vital in his work as a scientist; gone are the sobriety and civility of his demeanour. Instead, a whiny, immature, even paranoid form of behaviour takes over. It is a transformation which is utterly amazing to behold. One cannot believe, when witnessing him in this mode, that he is indeed a practicing scientist.

The split-personality of academics is largely generated by the belief that logic is strictly an academic tool only, and has no other application. That this belief is nonsensical is of little consequence to the academic, as it coincides nicely with this deeply-held desire to avoid thinking about reality at all costs. This relates to a point I made earlier, which is that academics consistently turn to the labyrinthine world of academia as a refuge from serious thought. By submitting to the belief that logic has no other application beyond that of solving academic or scientific puzzles, the academic is constantly able to nip his reasoning processes in the bud before they can begin to probe real-life issues of a philosophical nature. It is a process so habitual that he no longer has any consciousness of doing it. He thus renders himself completely safe from the possibility of entering the philosophical path.

This also goes some way to explaining why the posts of Andrew Beckwith were tinged with hysteria from the outset, and also why some of the other forum members were becoming increasingly hysterical as time went on. I was introducing reality into a domain that was specifically designed to keep reality out. The thoughts I was expressing were simple, direct, unarguable, and brimming with philosophic wisdom – the sort of thing that is far too powerful and heady for most

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

academic intellectuals to deal with. Faced with this onslaught, the academic often begins to panic and attempts to throw anything he can at the perpetrator, no matter how unrelated it might be to the conversation at hand, all in the desperate hope that the perpetrator will go away and take reality with him.

We can see, then, that forums such as Ne Plus Ultra are not just places to exchange information between intellectual people, but they serve a religious purpose as well. Just as Christians form churches so that they can bond together and block out everything in reality they don't like, academic intellectuals also feel a strong emotional need to close themselves off from the outside world altogether. This partly explains why they love talking to each other in hyper-complex sentences littered with obscure jargon, even in the many instances where simple sentences and straightforward language would perfectly suffice. It is as though they are deliberately talking to one another in code. It is similar to the way the Catholic Church used to conduct Mass, and even theological discussions, in Latin. There is great pleasure and comfort in thinking that one is part of an exclusive, inner circle, complete with its own private language; it makes one feel very special and constitutes an exquisite form of revenge against the wider world, which most people of high IQ feel persecuted by. Because of these strong psychological realities, it is very difficult to persuade academics to conduct their discussions in simple jargon-free language, understandable by everyone. Any inclination to make their knowledge more accessible is completely swamped by their desire to remain ensconced within a lofty, inner circle.

There were moments during my time at Ne Plus Ultra in which members deliberately flaunted their love of hyper-complex language, as though they felt a need to openly demonstrate their allegiance to a club which I did not belong. A particular example of this was when I posted in those Humphrey Appleby quotes which mocked their convoluted mode of speech. The immediate response from one or two of the forum members was to send their convoluted speech into overdrive and make it even more hyper-complex, as if to say, "You may mock us, but there is nothing you can do to make us change our ways. Our allegiance lies elsewhere." It was at this point, when they were all beginning to close ranks, that I knew that my involvement on the forum was quickly coming to an end.

So was my time at Ne Plus Ultra worth it? My initial reason for going there was the hope that there might be one or two members who were human and open to non-academic forms of intellectualizing – and perhaps even open to wisdom. That it turned out there was no one of that calibre (as far as I know) was certainly disappointing. But I did learn a little bit more about the psychology of academic intellectuals, so that at least was something. I gained a deeper insight into the fears which drive a person of high IQ into the extremes of hyper-complex academia and political correctness, and discerned more clearly just how much of a barrier to wisdom a high IQ can be.¹¹⁶

NATURAL THINKER

“The Falseness of the View that Every View is False”

For the sake of other readers of this forum, I'd like to analyze the belief that "everything is open to error" or "our every thought is false". It is a fairly widespread view in our society today and, even though it is easy to expose, one comes across it all the time. It is popular with aimless hedonistic types because it gives them a lazy way to justify their rejection of all idealism and their pleasure in being passive.

It should be noted that when a person asserts - or in most cases, preaches - that every thought is false, he is, in the very moment of preaching it, affirming something which he believes to be true - namely, that every thought is false. He asserts it as a truth in his attempt to tear down the idealistic position of his listener. But then, suddenly, in the very next moment, he completely disowns what he has just done and pretends that it didn't happen at all. For he realizes (subconsciously) that he is stuck with the idea that every thought is false, which immediately traps him in a flat contradiction. And because there is no way of dealing with such a fatal contradiction in a rational manner, the only way he can deal with it is by blocking it out of his mind altogether.

And so that is what he does. One minute he asserts a truth so powerful that (in his mind, at least) it defeats every great philosopher in history, the next moment he disowns it and assumes a pose of nothing ever happening at all. A bit like a robber denying point blank that he had robbed the bank he just came out of, even though he is wearing a balaclava and carrying bags of cash. It's a case of arbitrarily rewriting history to suit one's egotistical purposes, a form of denial of reality.

So not only is the person who asserts every thought is false (or every belief is crap, or everything is prone to error) being lazy, he is also being duplicitous and hypocritical. No one who actively engages in thought and values purity could possibly get stuck in it. But alas, millions do.¹¹⁷

“Intellect and Enlightenment”

You can only properly recognize a delusion through intellectual knowledge, the discriminating force. That intellectual knowledge in itself moves you closer to Truth, but not by any means all the way there. Then, the more you think about Truth, and the more you fill your mind with thoughts of Truth, and the more you love the Truth, you automatically move even closer to Truth, and the direct consciousness of Truth gradually becomes your normal state of being. It is like a process of osmosis. For example, if you spend a lot of time in the fog, then eventually your clothes become soaked, through no extra effort on your part.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Some people try to force their mind into altered states of consciousness, thinking they are getting direct intuitive experiences of Truth, and that they are taking a shortcut to enlightenment. But they are mistaken. They are short-circuiting, and ending in a cul-de-sac.

[An enlightened] person's wisdom can be applied to any particular problem, and see the underlying Truth in it. For example, the ability to see through all genuine koans, or, in fact, any occurrence in life. It would include the ability to correctly understand all genuine spiritual teachings.

The person whose knowledge was merely intellectual would struggle with koans, or difficult philosophical or moral problems. That is, even though they would be able to come up with some kind of reasoned response to koans, or religious teachings, or any occurrence in life, their response would not be spontaneous and effortless. They would be struggling, and would make mistakes, and would be inconsistent. Their responses would be mostly from their mind, rather from the depth of their character, and dare I say "heart".

If a person were perfect they would not feel the slightest trace of boredom at any time, neither gross (marked) nor subtle (faint traces) boredom.

A person who has mere intellectual knowledge, even of all delusions, doesn't necessarily escape even gross boredom (and other delusions), because the knowledge does not pervade all parts of their mind. Their knowledge is compartmentalized. You could call such a person "enlightened" if you wanted to, as indeed "a light has been turned on", but I wouldn't use the word in that case, as the person hasn't achieved anywhere near enough consistency, and hasn't developed enough love of truth. They are not a shining beacon. They are like a person who has just started walking in the fog, and has not yet become drenched to their bones. Or they are like a person who has been walking in the fog for some time, but they have remained relatively dry because they are wearing waterproof clothing, as they have no great desire to be drenched.

I would call a person "enlightened" when their intellectual knowledge of Reality extends to everything, plus that intellectual knowledge has largely pervaded all parts of their mind, dispelling all gross delusions and inconsistencies in thought and behavior, and they have a deep love of Truth which shines from them.

Such a person will still experience very subtle boredom, or disappointment, etc. But these subtle remaining delusions will be fleeting and very insubstantial. They will not be able to influence the person's primary thoughts and behaviours in any way. They will be like a barely detectable mist that does not obstruct their vision in any real way, and quickly evaporates.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

When I said that enlightenment consists of "removing delusions" that means doing a lot more than simply being aware of truths, and being aware of one's delusions.

For example, a person might know fully why it is wrong for them to eat too much, and not exercise enough, and be overweight. Yet they continue to eat too much, not exercise, and put on weight.

Or they might know why it is irrational for them to feel bored, yet they sometimes feel bored.

Having the intellectual knowledge of a truth is still a long way from removing the delusion, as many delusions have subtle roots, are deeply ingrained, and are habitual.

If a person only has subtle delusions left, then there is nothing in that person which can become aroused, or inflamed.

For example, there is nothing in them which is inflammable enough that it will burst into flame when fanned. There is at the most only a barely noticeable, mild warmth.

However, it is true that stress treatment will show-up any imperfections, and can reveal a person to be harbouring stronger delusions than they thought they were.

For example, an unexpected sharp blow directly on the thumb with a powerfully swung hammer can momentarily stir up some deep and irrational feelings. But if a person is solidly enlightened, they will feel little more than the actual physical pain.

If you don't have an emotional attachment to your own life, or the lives of others, or your own future, or the future lives of others, then it doesn't matter much what kind of bad situations you might find yourself in. The enlightened person sees all situations simply as inevitable situations of cause and effect.

So the enlightened person, though tortured, would continue to think and behave as an enlightened person.

At the most they would have to contend with the subtle, very mild hindrances I spoke of before, and these would not distract them from their primary thought.¹¹⁸

"The Role of Lying in the Life of Truth"

It is interesting to analyze the role of lying in the mind of the perfectly truthful individual. Contrary to what one might expect, telling a lie needn't be at odds with being perfectly truthful. Sometimes even the perfect sage has occasions to lie.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

A person who speaks the truth at all times and in all circumstances is essentially an aimless person who has no values. He just articulates what is on his mind without thought for the consequences. His truthfulness is actually the product of a deeper lie which underpins his entire existence - namely, that he refrains from systematically promoting consciousness of truth in others. In other words, his truthfulness is, at best, confined to his own mind. He does not bother himself with promoting truthfulness in others. His commitment to truth is thus selective and halfhearted.

A classic example which illustrates this principle concerns the man who is running away from an axe murderer and takes refuge inside your house. The axe murderer knocks on your front door and asks if you have seen the man he is chasing, and you have the choice of whether to lie or tell the truth.

The impulsive truthteller who tells the truth in all circumstances, no matter what, will obviously choose to condemn the man hiding in your house to death. But what if the man in hiding is an enlightened sage? By telling the truth and condemning him to death you effectively undermine the cause of wisdom by eliminating a potent teacher. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of people in the future would be robbed of an important source of wisdom. Thus, the compulsive truthteller would in fact be harming wisdom and truth in the long run by telling the truth in this circumstance.

So in a very real sense, the compulsive truthteller is still quite unconscious in his perceptiveness and still a long way short of being wise.

If you value anything at all in this world, even as something as lofty as the promotion of wisdom, you automatically create the need to protect this value, even to the point of lying for it. If you didn't, then your commitment to this value would be piece-meal.

The key issue for the wisdom-valuer, then, is not whether he can refrain from lying at all times - which, as I have just articulated, is impossible due to the value he places on wisdom - but whether the lies he creates are wise in nature and lack any trace of ego. Obviously, he would want to minimize the telling of lies as much as possible, if for no other reason that to maintain his credibility as a teacher of Truth. But if he does need to lie, then ideally, it would need to be from the purest of motivations.

The recognition that it is impossible not to lie on occasion is part and parcel of being perfect truthful.

Q: Perhaps you could give a clearer example of being forced to lie for the cause of truth.

A: Here is an interesting example. It may well be that the religion of Buddhism is little more than a giant lie concocted by Gautama Siddharta (the original Buddha) for the purpose of preserving his highest wisdom. In

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

other words, he created a religious community in which everyone was required to wear the same robes and the same haircut, and flooded it with realms of simplistic dogma and superficial rules, knowing that it would attract sheep-like individuals in droves. Although sheep-like individuals have no potential for wisdom, they tend to be very good at mundane things like building temples, copying texts, organizing lectures, administrating communities and so on. The Buddha saw, perhaps, that they could be harnessed to create a vehicle in which his deepest truths would be preserved for the sake of those few advanced thinkers in future generations.

The process is a bit like a bird eating a tasty seed and flying away to defecate the seed in another spot. What attracts the bird is the taste and smell of the seed, while the most valuable part of the seed is the genetic material contained within it, which the bird knows nothing about. Similarly, the rituals, rules and dogmas of the Buddhist religion are the "tasty" elements which attract multitudes of witless monks, and it is through their mundane, sheep-like activity that they unwittingly preserve the genuine wisdom which exists deep within Buddhism. In other words, the Buddha created a lie for the sake of truth.

I don't know if this is what really happened, but I cannot think of any other (wise) reason why Buddhism was created in the first place. There is no other way that its existence can be justified from the point of view of wisdom. Unless, of course, the Buddha was really a Rashneesh-type charlatan. (But if that were the case, then the presence of the genuine wisdom which does exist in certain parts of Buddhism would still need to be explained.)¹¹⁹

"Some Repulsive Aspects of Academic Philosophy"

One of the things that really puts me off academic philosophy is that it is intrinsically a reactionary process. The academic philosopher is always "reacting" to what other academic philosophers are saying, which gives him little time and space to grow beyond this sort of thing and delve more deeply into life. To go beyond the conventions of the day and uncover Ultimate Truth is almost unheard of in an academic philosopher. He would just be laughed at by all the other academics. As a result, the thoughts of an academic lack power and tend to become dated very quickly.

Just as no one pays any attention to the antiquated views of Thomas Aquinas - who was the equivalent of the academic philosopher in his day - so too, no one is going to pay any attention to Russell, Kant, and Wittgenstein in five hundred years time. Their thinking lacks timelessness.

Another thing I dislike is that the views that academics love to react to are nearly always caricature views. I always feel I'm entering a comic strip whenever I talk to an academic or read one of their books. The positions that everyone is loudly reacting to are nearly always exaggerated, flaky

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

positions that no one in his right mind would hold, and yet there is this great pretence going on that this is serious, lofty work.

Another thing that bothers me is that the men they like to hold up as a great philosophers of history - Descartes, Hegel, Kant, Russell, Wittgenstein, etc - are all invariably third-rate. The thinking of these men is nearly always overly-complicated, superficial, conventional, formulaic, overly-pedantic, and unrealistic. Anyone with a nose for Truth would pick this up immediately. It is wrong to call these men "philosophers" - let alone "great philosophers". In reality, they are little more than glorified crossword players shamelessly interacting with one another. It's no wonder academic philosophy has become such a laughing stock all over the world.¹²⁰

"The Motivations of a Buddha"

David Quinn: "... except for Buddhas who act through momentum, rather than emotion."

Question: "Can you expand on this. Do you just mean the momentum of actions that flow naturally from a strong desire to know truth and experience reality?"

David Quinn: "More or less. It is the momentum generated by millions of ethical decisions made in the course of becoming a Buddha. It reaches the stage where the motivation to promote wisdom is no longer emotional and ego-driven, but is spontaneous, automatic, and natural. It continues unchecked because there is no longer any ego to hinder this momentum in any way. He enters into a kind of ethical free-fall, if you will."¹²¹

"The Problem with Using Pseudonyms on the Net"

When one is writing to a pseudonym, it makes one seriously doubt that one is talking to a real, definite human being, as opposed to a mere persona. The person with the pseudonym feels like a pretender, or a wisp of air, at best.

Weininger has some interesting words on this subject:

"Ones name and a strong devotion to it are even more dependent on personality than is the sense of property. ... Women are not bound to their names with any strong bond. When they marry they give up their own name and assume that of their husband without any sense of loss. ..."

I grant that to create multiple names for oneself is arguably better than being nameless, and thus fully feminine. But multiple names for oneself are tending towards the multiple personality syndrome, that is found almost exclusively in women, and is closely allied with namelessness.

I think using [a pseudonym is fine] if a person calls themselves, say, "God", so long as they are consistent with it.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

If a person uses one name when they are at home, and another name when they are at work, then I don't see that as consistent. Similarly if a person uses one name when they are on the Internet, and another name at other times.¹²²

“Observations on Karma”

The following observations on karma have been garnered from a series of posts by Kevin Solway in response to the traditional/populist views of reincarnation put forward by a conventional Buddhist:

The word "karma" can mean many different things, depending on the context in which it is used.

The kind of karma that consists of delusions and deluded actions, and which keep one from being a Buddha, is really only a sub-category of the larger category of simple cause and effect, and plain determinism. Therefore the rules that apply to cause and effect also apply to this kind of karma. That is, this kind of karma consists of particular kinds of causes, namely, those that cause one to be deluded.

Forces are changing all the time, fanning-out, and absorbing, and mixing with other forces, so a karmic, or causal force cannot be identical from one moment to the next. You might perceive a thread of similarity between two forces, or in myself from one moment to the next, but that's all it is.

We could mentally group all those actions together into a single force and give it a name. We could even call it a "self" of sorts, that "reincarnates" as it is manifest in different forms.

But this kind of reincarnation doesn't happen in a neat and narrow linear way, from one single body to another single body, as in the traditional reincarnation belief. Rather, this kind of reincarnation fans out infinitely in all directions. One person reincarnates in a thousand different places each and every moment. So this is a completely different kind of reincarnation to that held by religions like Buddhism and Hinduism.

The language of reincarnation; eg, "A deceiver is reborn as a fox", is only meant to be used as a language tool, like poetry, to succinctly point to the workings of cause and effect.

It effectively means: A deceiver is a fox, a form of life lower than human, and his actions lead to further forms of lower life.

"Bad karma" essentially means "delusions" - mistaken conceptions about the nature of reality. These cause one to be "born" in the deluded state of "samsara", where there exist mistaken notions about birth and death, and life is full of fear, boredom, false enjoyments, going in circles, not learning from mistakes, toiling for no gain, and suffering in general.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Once you rid yourself of these delusions you cease to have mistaken conceptions about the nature of reality, and you become a "Buddha" in Nirvana, residing in the "Buddha-realms", which is really just here, minus the delusions.

This is similar to Jesus's teaching that the Kingdom of God is right here on earth, only we can't see it.

As I understand it, rebirth is entirely like waves [in the ocean]. For example, a student may appear to have inherited a lot from his teacher (just as the future wave appears to have inherited a lot from the current wave), and thus we may be able to "see his teacher in him". Thus he is the future wave of the previous wave that was his teacher. He is not exactly the same wave, because no wave is identical for two consecutive moments. And no person is identical for two consecutive moments.

In the case of my changing from moment to moment, there is a very considerable similarity between each momentary incarnation. However, once my brain physically dies, the mechanism for this concentration of similar forces is dismantled. While cause and effect goes on as before you no longer recognize a strong resemblance of "Kevin" - unless of course you read "Poison for the Heart" or suchlike. Or you might meet someone who has been strongly influenced by my thought and recognize "Kevin", yet the resemblance will not be anywhere near as strong as if I were still physically alive.

Similarly with a wave. While the wave is in the deep ocean, and unimpeded, its form continues through time and is generally recognizable. However, once it smashes up against the beach (absorbed by sand and seaweed) its recognizable form disappears. The mechanism for its "staying together" has dissipated, yet it continues in other, less recognizable forms.

If there is a mechanism other than the brain to keep a stream of consciousness more or less "together" and recognizable over a period of time, and past the physical death of the body, then this has yet to be demonstrated.

Similarly with the wave: if the wave really continues in the same easily recognizable form, even after it has smashed up on the beach and disappeared, then this has yet to be demonstrated.

All waves necessarily "fan out" so to speak, taking entirely different forms. The future wave we see is only one of the infinite consequences of the present wave (incidentally, we cannot know for sure that the future wave is directly/immediately related to the present wave, as it may have arrived through a different source). Every wave has an effect on the water immediately below it, which in turn has an effect on the deeper water, and ocean floor, etc. Every wave has an effect on the air around it, which in

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

turn has an effect on the whole atmosphere. A wave reflects radiation, such as light, into space, and has an effect on objects in space.

Of course I concede that the wave crest is not really an "entity" as such, yet appears as such through a period of time - exactly the same as with a person. My point is that the reality is much more complex.

By "fanning out" I don't mean becoming more chaotic, only that the effects, the influences, fan out infinitely. The effects of the flapping of a butterfly's wings fan out infinitely into the environment, but they do not do so in a truly chaotic sense, as the effects conform to the strict laws of Nature, and the strict laws of cause and effect.

Let's take a work of spiritual literature for example. It may be the case that it becomes more and more diluted and corrupted with time, "fanning out" to its detriment. On the other hand, the forces of cause and effect may determine that it "fans out" in a beneficial way, evolving into a work which is even more pure and potent than the original, as it is handed down, slightly different, from one generation to the next, with different people learning from it, clarifying it, and perfecting it.

Karma is just cause and effect, and it will do whatever it wants to do, regardless of what we might like it to do for the sake of justice or fair play. If cause and effect wants to erase this entire galaxy in an instant, in some kind of cosmic vaporization, it will do so. It has no concern for any of our petty misdeeds, or whether Thomas or Kevin want to perfect something they have been working on, or have any unresolved business, or whether they think they have had a difficult life and believe they deserve an easier one. All that is consolation for old grannies.

It is extremely conceited of today's Buddhists for them to think the Universe cares so much about them. As if there is some kind of personal clerk somewhere, jotting down everything they do, virtuous and non-virtuous acts, and painstakingly plotting how these will all resurface in some future life. That is complete madness.

If the wave that crashes on the shore, momentarily and by sheer chance attained consciousness and the desire for Buddhahood the moment before it was annihilated on the sand, it doesn't mean that it will come back in another life to continue its pursuit - not if cause and effect determines that it won't.

Common Buddhist blind faith would say that it will continue its pursuit for perfection - not for any reason that they have, but just because that's what they have been told, and that's they want to believe. That is exactly the same kind of pitiful blind faith we see in Christians, with their believe in heaven and hell (and funnily enough, a lot more believe in heaven than hell).

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

It's also amusing that the only people I've met who do remember their previous lives are fruitcakes. Even the Dalai Lama has said he doesn't remember his past lives. That's one thing in his favour. He is ashamed that several of the past Dalai Lamas were much, much better writers and poets than he is.

"Not remembering previous lives" is in reality only poetic talk for not remembering the past, for not reflecting on history, and not remembering one's own life from day to day, and from minute to minute. That's why people are doomed to go in circles, repeating their mistakes.¹²³

THE LARKIN DEBATE (2004)

February 2, 2004 - February, 8, 2004

"This is a copy of the infamous debate between Robert Larkin and myself on the nature of enlightenment, held at [The Ponderers Guild](#), an internet discussion forum. Although the debate was ostensibly between the two of us, it was significantly influenced by the many comments and observations made by interested onlookers on the [Commentary Thread](#), which the moderator of TPG had set up for that purpose. It also brought what could have been a sterile "academic" debate into life and exposed the tremendous clash between spiritual and worldly thought. It even revealed some of the reasons why thinkers of the calibre of Socrates and Jesus were persecuted and killed by society in the past.

"To get the most out of the following discussion, then, the reader is advised to read the commentary thread in conjunction with the debate."

- [David Quinn](#)

Introduction by the moderator, Guildenstern February 2

Robert Larkin and David Quinn have been looking for "neutral ground" on which to have a civilized, structured debate, and I thought here would be a great place, as it may even have a chance of inspiring TPGians to have similar debates as well. Here are the rules:

The question is on the nature of enlightenment, David on the affirmative side and Robert on the negative. I unfortunately do not know David's specific views on the nature of enlightenment, so I cannot frame a precise question to which he would answer in the affirmative. But the crux of the matter is to be on the nature of enlightenment and, as Robert puts it, whether David Quinn has "got it".

The format of the debate is as follows. First, each side is to make two constructive arguments, beginning with the Affirmative (David), and alternating. These arguments are not intended to respond to each other, but merely to put up arguments for each side's case. Then, there will be two rebuttals each, beginning with the Negative (Robert) and alternating. Rebuttals are intended to respond to the arguments brought up earlier; rebuttals may bring in new information, but may not make new arguments.

The only people who may post in this thread are Robert Larkin and David Quinn. Anyone else who posts in this thread will be warned. A separate thread will be put up for anyone who wishes to make comments on this thread.

The debate shall begin when David puts up his first argument, which he must do within

24 hours, and each participant thereafter has 24 hours to respond. The debate format must be strictly followed (i.e., no extraneous posts in between the "phases"), and no editing of posts is allowed (consequently, everyone is encouraged to forgive spelling or grammatical errors, which, without editing, cannot be fixed).

And with that, let us begin!

Opening Statement by David Quinn February 3

Hello all,

This debate has come about because Robert recently visited the Genius Forum for the first time and, like many before him, reacted negatively to what was being expressed there. In particular, he didn't like the way I was speaking with authority on spiritual matters and felt this assumption of authority on my part needed to be challenged, which is fair enough. Although I very rarely make the open boast that I am enlightened (such pettiness bores me), it cannot be denied that it is implicit in the manner of my speech. I do believe that I know what I am talking about when it comes to spiritual issues, I do consider myself to be an expert on wisdom, and this conviction shines through in everything I say. This is, at bottom, what Robert is reacting to.

The decision to hold this debate at a "neutral venue" was also his. I personally have no idea what a "neutral venue" is, as it is obvious that almost everyone has strong opinions on matters of truth. Thus, no matter where you stage it, you are always going to have people who are biased one way or another. Not that it particularly matters. I don't really care

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

where this debate is held, as long as I can entertain the illusion that there are at least one or two intelligent people in the crowd viewing it. Since I have no reason to believe that the Ponderers Guild is completely bereft of these individuals, here is as good a place as any to stage it. I thank Guildenstern for making his forum available.

Now onto the subject matter at hand ...

Enlightenment is what the mind experiences when it is no longer deluded about the nature of existence. The mind is deluded when it falsely imagines things to be existing, when in reality they do not. A crude example of this is the belief in the Christian God, which millions of people deludedly imagine to be existing. A more subtle example is the belief that the Universe is made of matter, or energy, or consciousness, or spirit, or that it exists in a physical, objective sense. These are all examples of the mind projecting imaginary qualities onto Reality.

The core delusion of the mind, which forms the basis of all other delusions, is the belief in inherent existence. I refer here to the instinctive and deeply-held belief that things really exist in an independent, objective manner. From this core delusions spring the thousands of beliefs which make up religion, science, agnosticism and atheism. In each case, one is creating imaginary entities (such as God, matter, objective existence, etc) in order to explain a "reality" which is falsely imagined to exist in the first place. As soon as this core delusion is eliminated, every other delusion concerning the nature of existence naturally falls into a heap - like the sudden collapse of a stack of cards - and it is here that the mind experiences enlightenment.

What the enlightened person perceives, in his enlightenment, is the formlessness of Reality, sometimes referred to as "emptiness" or "the Void". He perceives that everything is causally created and an illusion of the moment, including his own self. He sees that there is nothing at all which is objectively or fundamentally real. There is nothing to seek or grasp, nothing to explain or resolve, nothing to uncover or know. There is only the purity of Nature relentlessly producing whim after whim after whim. This is Nature as it really is. This is Ultimate Reality.

The enlightened person is one who is fully conscious of Ultimate Reality. He has completely abandoned the idea of a permanent, fixed self, and fully accepts the reality that his very own existence is nothing more than a momentary, illusory whim. Such a person is utterly beyond the emotions (there being nothing to get emotional about), and utterly beyond religion (he no longer depends on blind faith). His knowledge is infinitely powerful and cutting, and his vision is boundless. He has tapped into the most fabulous reality in the Universe, which very few know about.

This wisdom is not something that can be found in books. Even the greatest Buddhist and Taoists texts only hint at it. It is something that each person has to discover for himself. If he doesn't do this, if he only relies on the reading of spiritual texts for his knowledge of enlightenment, if he continues to bring his own deluded mind into the equation, then he will never understand it. Just as a spoon will never be able to taste the soup it dwells in, such a person will never be able to taste this great wisdom, no matter how many texts he reads.

One of Robert Larkin's favourite arguments centers on what he calls "textual backing". This refers to the belief that a spiritual view, made by you or I, can only be valid if it is also found in the scriptures - meaning, in this instance, the Buddhist sutras. The argument states that if one expresses a view that is not found within the scriptures, or conflicts with what is contained within them, then it cannot be an enlightened view by default. The trouble with this view is that unless you are enlightened and thoroughly familiar with the great wisdom of Nature, then there is no way you can determine whether the scriptures themselves, or any part therein, are valid. The texts themselves need to be tested. To coin a phrase, they need "enlightenment backing". They need to be judged from the perspective of enlightenment and this can only be accomplished by becoming enlightened oneself.

Without this "enlightenment backing", Robert can only employ dubious, second-hand joke methods in an attempt to establish the validity of the "scriptures". For example, he might count the number of adherents of the Buddhist religion and declare that millions of Buddhists can't be wrong in believing that the sutras are valid. Or he might count

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

the number of times a particular idea occurs within the sutras and declare that the most oft-expressed views represent the "true teachings" of Buddhism. Or he might turn to the research of scholars in an attempt to ascertain what the Buddha really believed. These methods are laughable, for obvious reasons. But whatever method Robert decides to use will always be speculative at best and will always incorporate a number of blind assumptions. This is because he is unenlightened.

Spiritual words are ambiguous at the best of times and admit of varying interpretation. They do not possess the truth in themselves. The reader has to bring something extra to the process of interpreting them and that something extra is his own wisdom. Only in this manner can they serve as a catalyst for further spiritual progress. But if he lacks this wisdom to begin with, then nothing of worth is going to happen. Instead, he is only going to project his own delusions onto the words and transform them into a false message that has no connection with the author's conceptions at all. And alas, this is precisely what has been happening for centuries in Buddhism and Zen.

In concluding this opening essay, I believe that the debate should not focus on whether or not I, David Quinn, am enlightened. That is a pointless exercise because it can only be resolved by the reader becoming enlightened himself and thereby developing the means to make his own authoritative judgments in the matter. Instead, the debate should focus on the question of the nature of enlightenment and the manner in which it can be attained. I mean, honestly, who cares whether I am enlightened or not? That's just gossip. The only thing that matters is the quality of our actions and words - not just mine, but everyone's. Only by all of us contributing in this way, do we have a chance of building a saner, more intelligent world.

Opening Statement by Robert Larkin
February 3

Howdy.

Interest in eastern psychologies like Buddhism, Zen, and Taoism continues to be strong as in interest in their ideas of enlightenment or transcendence of ordinary con-

sciousness. While it would be convenient to simply argue that enlightenment does not exist - and I do not know that it does - I will neither take that route nor ask you to believe in the possibility of enlightenment.

I. David Quinn Cannot be Reasonably Presumed to be Enlightened.

A. "David Quinn Himself is a Reasonable Subject for Consideration."

It is an entirely natural question, 'What would an enlightened person be like?' David wrote above, Although I very rarely make the open boast that I am enlightened (such pettiness bores me) I mean, honestly, who cares whether I am enlightened or not? That's just gossip. If it's gossip it's gossip David himself spread with his open boasts on several ezboards about his enlightenment. He could merely have discussed enlightenment without making claims about his own accomplishments - it is possible for many people to mention enlightenment without mentioning David Quinn. David writes chiefly at [Genius Forum](#) where he, Dan Rowden, and Kevin Solway are a Trinity of sorts, often being referred to as QRS, although who sits on the apex of the triangle is unknown to me. Rowden and Solway declined the [invitation](#) (mine, 2/1/04 2:12 am) to appear with Quinn in this debate but they have also openly boasted about [enlightenment](#) (Solway, 2/2/04 2:33 am). They are here in spirit and you can find writing similar to Quinn's on their site. David Quinn, having associated himself with enlightenment, takes on the burden of that association. If I publicly announced I was a Nazi or a terrorist I would also be taking on a reasonable burden.

B. "David's Claim To Enlightenment Should Be Rejected On the Face of It."

Can a reasonable person assume that David Quinn is enlightened because David says he is? That is the only reason David himself will allow since he argues that absent enlightenment backing the accuracy of canonical discussions of enlightenment cannot be judged. He wrote:

One of Robert Larkin's favourite arguments centers on what he calls "textual backing". This

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

refers to the belief that a spiritual view, made by you or I, can only be valid if it is also found in the scriptures - meaning, in this instance, the Buddhist sutras. The argument states that if one expresses a view that is not found within the scriptures, or conflicts with what is contained within them, then it cannot be an enlightened view by default. The trouble with this view is that unless you are enlightened and thoroughly familiar with the great wisdom of Nature, then there is no way you can determine whether the scriptures themselves, or any part therein, are valid. The texts themselves need to be tested. To coin a phrase, they need "enlightenment backing". They need to be judged from the perspective of enlightenment and this can only be accomplished by becoming enlightened oneself.

Now it is a man of straw argument that I insist only what appears in texts can be admitted, and it is not the only man of straw David put together. What I actually argue is that the literature is reasonable evidence and it ought to be considered. David supplies circular reasoning which inherently cannot prove itself. He argues that only an enlightened man can understand whether the literature about enlightenment is correct. But if one is enlightened what good is the literature and if one is not enlightened what is one to make of it? Apparently the unenlightened are allowed to reason about the literature but not to reason about David Quinn and merely because he claims he is enlightened. Now since a rational person would accept no such claim, David, in claiming enlightenment and then in supplying a convenient argument that would put that enlightenment beyond scrutiny, has instead absolutely necessitated the rational rejection of his mere claim to enlightenment. Allow me to merely claim I am enlightened and now I am on equal footing and free to say whatever I might wish. What then becomes reasonable evidence when these two gods are arguing? All we would have is the same evidence we would anyway have as rational individuals, and despite David's attempts to pre-empt it.

Further, how could we possibly question David's own exposition on enlightenment? Since we are not enlightened we cannot know if it has validity until we become enlightened. There is no room here for argument and given David's reasoning what could we do but accept that he has given us the Grand Truth? And what is the nature of that reason-

ing? 1. It is circular reasoning that cannot prove itself. 2. It is an attempt to restrict scrutiny of what David has written. 3. It renders valueless even his own exposition on enlightenment.

David Quinn's claims of enlightenment should be rejected. No rational person would accept any mere claim some individual is enlightened, and David, in attempting to evade scrutiny, behaves in a manner that ought to cause alarms. The Buddha said to question everything but David says don't question me and he posts tortured logic to support it.

II. Refutation

A. "David Has Made No Reasonable Arguments About Enlightenment."

David has come into the debate and without referring to any support, other than his own authority, has proceeded to expound on enlightenment. A reasonable person could not conclude that David has made any case here. His case is anyway 'dishwatery' since it is hard to argue against "Enlightenment is what the mind experiences when it is no longer deluded about the nature of existence." Yet let me argue against it anyway. Enlightenment is:

1. Not Cessation.
2. Not Arising.
3. Not an Interruption.
4. Not a Perpetuation.
5. Not one thing.
6. Not many things.
7. Not going forth.
8. Not arriving.*

Enlightenment is quite simply ineffable and David's claims elsewhere contradict Buddhism.†

Note the insistence on mere words being true and which is contrary to Buddhism.

* Nagarjuna, The Eight Negations.

† The Genius Forum, Quantum Mechanics See: Quinn, 1/30/04 11:17 am; Quinn, 1/30/04 2:47 pm; Solway, 1/30/04 4:12 pm; Solway, 1/30/04 5:59 pm; Quinn, 1/30/04 6:59 pm; Quinn, 1/30/04 7:21 pm; Solway, 1/30/04 7:55 pm; Solway, 1/30/04 8:20 pm; Solway, 1/30/04 9:26 pm, etc.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

B. "David's Conception of Enlightenment is Inhumane."

Are there positive qualities in enlightenment?

"The teachings of the Buddha are divided into three yanas [vehicles]: Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Theravada, the most popular school of Hinayana ('Lesser Vehicle') concentrates on discipline and virtue. Mahayana [Great Vehicle] concentrates more on altruistic motivations (compassion) and wisdom. ... Vajrayana [Diamond Vehicle] also 'Mantrayana' is the third of the three vehicle of Buddhism. ... All three incorporate discipline, compassion, and wisdom with different methods and motivations toward the common aspiration for Enlightenment."

"One of the most important aspects of being a Buddhist ... is developing compassion and loving-kindness. It is in some ways easy to be a Buddhist with one's head and not one's heart. Buddhism today and at the time of the Buddha had great intellectual appeal. It is a religion that encourages investigation in a systematic, almost scientific way. But Buddhism is also about the heart and without that it might be perceived as a cold religion. A Buddhist attempts to engage both head and heart- rational investigation of the self along with an impulse towards developing selflessness - a wonderful paradox!"

"Compassion. This is one of the key virtues Buddhism promotes. It was the Buddha's compassion for all sentient beings that led to him teaching the dhamma. It is the Bodhisattva's compassion that leads him to postpone his own entry into nibbana and help others to it first."

"Loving-kindness. This quality is given especial emphasis in Buddhism with its ideal of unselfish and all-embracing love. In the words of the metta sutta, just as mother would give her own life to save that of her child, so we too must cultivate loving-kindness for all beings."

"Ahimsa (noninjury). The moral principle of avoiding harm to other forms of life, including animals and sometimes even the apparently inanimate world."

Note that in David's conception of enlightenment there is no compassion and no love and certainly no understanding that as The Buddha observed 'the world is burning' and

that one has a responsibility to the world other than writing texts and claiming they cannot be criticized.

C. "The Men of Straw Army."

In addition to the man of straw mentioned above, David has brought with him a small straw army.

... Robert can only employ dubious, second-hand joke methods in an attempt to establish the validity of the "scriptures". For example, he might count the number of adherents of the Buddhist religion and declare that millions of Buddhists can't be wrong in believing that the sutras are valid. Or he might count the number of times a particular idea occurs within the sutras and declare that the most oft-expressed views represent the "true teachings" of Buddhism. Or he might turn to the research of scholars in an attempt to ascertain what the Buddha really believed. These methods are laughable, for obvious reasons. But whatever method Robert decides to use will always be speculative at best and will always incorporate a number of blind assumptions. This is because he is unenlightened.

It's always dangerous to write about the other side before they've appeared.

First, I don't intend to employ any joke methods here, like trying to insulate myself from criticism and using questionable logic for that questionable purpose.

Second, I haven't claimed validity of any scriptures. I have quoted Nagarjuna, one of the most important thinkers in Buddhism, while David has relied on ... himself. Nagarjuna, regardless of the accuracy of his statements, puts the lie to David's conception.

Third, regarding 'count the number of adherents ...' it is one thing to erect a man of straw and quite another to raise one so simple a child could shoot it down; David accomplishes nothing here but betray his lack of creativity.

Fourth, regarding counting the number of appearances of an idea, see 'Third'.

Fifth, consideration of scholarship is not on its face laughable; what is laughable are the ridiculous men of straw David creates.

Sixth, I might speculate sometimes but that is what we unenlightened humans do; note that by merely claiming I am enlightened I

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

could instantly get past that charge, according to David.

Seventh, I don't claim to be enlightened but it is you, David, who has ended up with the tough row to hoe.

D. "Hoisting Him on His Own Petard."

David's last thought was: "The only thing that matters is the quality of our actions and words - not just mine, but everyone's." David has attempted to place himself beyond criticism by using tortured logic; he has built a small army of men of straw; he has given arguments on the nature of enlightenment which, in terms of Buddhism, lack compassion and responsibility, and he has presented himself as his own authority for his writing. The quality of his actions and words are easily observed.

Conclusion

In this first developmental post we saw that David Quinn despite his irrational protests is a fitting subject of consideration. Anyone who claims to be enlightened should expect to be called on it. We also saw that David's claim of enlightenment should be rejected out of hand.

He relied on his own authority for his discussion of enlightenment. His conception is contrary to Buddhism as the Nagarjuna suggests. David's enlightenment is devoid of compassion, compassion being a fundament of Buddhism.

Despite David's suggestion he is beyond your criticism I ask you to consider if what you witnessed from David is likely the behavior of an enlightened man, or alternatively, if that is enlightenment would you want it?

Second Statement by David Quinn

February 4

Robert seems to have forgotten that the "rebuttal" part of the debate is supposed to occur in the final two rounds, as decreed by the rules set up by Guildenstern. As I understand it, the first two rounds were meant to be devoted to developing constructive arguments in favour of one's point of view. But there is nothing like this in Robert's opening

statement. It is little more than a series of reactive attacks upon myself.

At the very least, he should have given reasons why we should take Nagarjuna's views seriously, or why he thinks compassion is an essential element of wisdom, or why he thinks Buddhism is an expression of enlightenment. If he is going to try and use these things to undermine my point of view, then he needs to establish a solid rational foundation for their validity to begin with. Otherwise, it's all just hot air.

I will give Robert another chance to make amends and post an essay with some substance. Meanwhile, in this essay, I will expand on what I had written in my opening statement by focusing on two specific issues:

- (a) The issue of circular reasoning and the act of verifying one's own enlightenment.
- (b) The nature of enlightenment itself.

The perceptive reader will discern that these two issues are closely related. Enlightenment is, by definition, the absence of delusion, and so it follows that no one else, apart from the enlightened person, is qualified to assess a claim of enlightenment, whether it be from another person or himself. Only the enlightened person has the clarity of mind and depth of wisdom to understand what enlightenment is in the first place; thus, only he has the capacity to recognize its existence in the physical world. The judgments made by everyone else will always be twisted and distorted by the presence of their own delusions. At best, they can only make a few blind guesses in the dark, but that's about it.

There are no other means of verification. This cannot be stressed enough. There is only the process of verification performed by the enlightened mind, either upon its own claim or upon the claim of another, and nothing else. There is no other way of doing it.

Some Buddhists try to get around this by believing in a system of patriarchal succession. This system assumes there has been an unbroken succession of enlightened people which stretches back to the very beginnings of Buddhism. Each successive enlightened master has his enlightenment verified and confirmed by the one before (who is usually his mentor), and, in turn, each one verifies and confirms the enlightenment of

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

the fellow coming after (usually one of his students).

The trouble with this system is that, not only is it extremely vulnerable to corruption (it only takes one bad egg to completely ruin the system), but it neglects the fact that it too rests on a self-validated claim of enlightenment. After all, the very first enlightened master of the successional system didn't have anyone around to verify and confirm his enlightenment. He had to validate his own enlightenment for himself. Thus, far from being an answer to the "problem" of self-validation, the successional system actually utilizes and supports it.

Other Buddhists try to get around the "problem" by pretending that if lots of people believe that someone is enlightened, then that is enough to prove that he is enlightened. This is called "validation by popular appeal". If someone like the Dalai Lama, for example, wears some religious robes, bows and smiles at everyone he meets, and keeps on talking about the importance of happiness, peace and compassion, then, for a lot of people, that clinches it. No more proof is needed. The Dalai Lama, or whoever it may be, is obviously an enlightened man.

But again, the trouble with this kind of thinking is that it rests on the assumption that ordinary, ignorant people possess the capacity to recognize the existence of enlightenment, which, in turn, implies that they already have a correct idea of what enlightenment is - which, of course, is nonsensical. Only the person who has eliminated all delusion from his mind, and consequently has become enlightened, can have a correct understanding of enlightenment.

No, it cannot be escaped. Self-validation is the only method possible. Even if a reputed enlightened master were to come up to you and confirm you as an enlightened being, you would still have to ascertain in your own mind whether he possessed the credentials to make such a judgment. That is to say, you would have to confirm him first. And to do that properly, you would need to be enlightened.

Now it can be argued, and has been argued by Robert and others on this forum, that the process of self-validation is steeped in circular reasoning and therefore lacks validity. That this objection is unfounded is easily

demonstrated when one considers that all knowledge, without exception, is founded upon circular reasoning. Indeed, any kind of comprehension that we experience, in whatever area of life, is a product of circular reasoning. Even scientific explanations are inherently circular. Consider the scientific explanation of why a cup of tea is hot, for example: "It is hot because energy was injected into the system causing the constituent molecules of the tea to become more randomly energetic and active". Given that the word "heat" is literally defined to mean the random energetic activity of molecules (or atoms or particles) within a system, the explanation quickly boils down to the circularity of, "It is hot because it contains heat." Or, "It is hot because it is hot."

It should be noted, however, that even though this is a circular piece of reasoning, it isn't meaningless. Understanding that a cup of tea is hot because it is hot is, in itself, a meaningful statement. It enables our minds make sense of the empirical reality before us and to affirm its existence. This meaningfulness then carries over to the more complicated, fleshed out version of the circular reasoning that characterizes the scientific explanation.

In the case of self-validating one's enlightenment, the principle is exactly the same. The enlightened person is simply affirming the existence of his own enlightenment. The affirmation is valid because it is the result of the perfect clarity of mind and undistorted judgment which characterizes enlightenment. Remember that the enlightened mind, by definition, no longer projects imaginary existences onto what is "there". It perceives things exactly as they are. So when the enlightened mind turns its attention towards the issue of whether or not it is enlightened, the answer it will uncover will necessarily be correct. It will know for sure that it is enlightened.

This line of reasoning is very subtle and a lot of people misinterpret it. They think it means this: "I believe that I am enlightened. Everything that an enlightened person believes is necessarily true. Therefore, the belief that I am enlightened is necessarily true". But this is not the argument I am presenting. This is an invalid form of circular reasoning. It is invalid because it uses an unsubstantiated

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

statement as a premise and thus lacks the platform to say anything meaningful. The argument I offer is entirely different. It says, "As soon as enlightenment exists, it has, by its very nature, the capacity to judge that it exists."

Here is a good way to illustrate this point:

Imagine that an ordinary person is walking along the street, minding his own business, when suddenly, though the sheer workings of chance, his mind stops experiencing false thoughts and he enters into a period of enlightenment. Imagine also that it is a complete surprise to him, that he previously had no desire or thought to seek enlightenment, that it occurred spontaneously as a freak of Nature. It might have been the result of a quantum fluctuation or whatever. Now imagine that he actively uses this priceless tool of perceiving everything without any false interpretations to uncover the great truths of life, as anyone naturally would in such a situation. And then, after he does this, imagine that he decides to turn this tool upon the nature of enlightenment itself and the state of his own mind. Imagine that his mind is so crystal clear and free of false interpretations that he is naturally able to perceive that he is indeed enlightened.

Even though the self-verification process here is a circular one, it is nevertheless valid and meaningful. It is valid and meaningful because the enlightenment experienced in this instance is real. It springs into existence, and then, only after that, does the individual involved make the verification. That is to say, he makes the verification from a position of fact.

In my experience, most people find this kind of thinking very scary, which is why they are always quick to distance themselves from its enormous implications by labeling it circular and meaningless. They are frightened by the idea of personally understanding Reality and becoming a genuine authority in wisdom in their own right. For them, it would mean far too much personal responsibility and far too much trust in the workings of their own minds. It is far, far easier to delegate everything to others and turn them into authority figures. That way you're not really accountable at all. There is always someone else to prop up your thoughts, and someone else to blame.

This is spiritual cowardice, of course, and yet nearly everyone on this earth participates in it. It represents the blanket rejection of truth for the sake of a safe, unconscious life.

The desire to remain unconsciousness (of Reality) is the single biggest reason why people remain deluded and continue to perceive things as inherently existing. Unconsciousness makes life simpler and easier. It enables people to enjoy their emotional attachments and delusions. It enables them to remain as children and to submit to any irrational belief they like and engage in any kind of mindless behaviour that appeals to them. That is to say, it allows them to give their egos free reign, which is experienced as great freedom and bliss. The ego inside people instinctively demands this unconsciousness, for it is only within this unconsciousness that the ego is able to thrive. This explains why people are so very reluctant to think too deeply about life and develop a greater consciousness of Reality. For it means challenging the very premise of their lives up until that point. It means challenging their deepest loves and attachments.

Because of this, most people turn their backs on rational thought and the development of greater awareness of Reality, and instead energetically strive to go in the other direction, towards an even greater form of unconsciousness. This they call "living in the now", or "living spontaneously", or "becoming like a child", or "abandoning all concepts". There is a kind of false freedom to be found in this greater form of unconsciousness, and there are many people who, after spending years struggling against it in the attempt to remain idealistic and rational, finally surrender themselves to its welcoming bliss, and they experience a sense of liberation as a result. There are some who even believe this to be enlightenment. Indeed, much of modern religion, particularly Western Buddhism and Zen, is centered around this false conception.

In many ways, it is only natural that the human race continues to find unconsciousness more preferable to enlightened consciousness of Reality. We are a species that has evolved, not to become philosophers and sages, but to survive in the physical world and pass on our genes. And the most efficient way to do this, from an evolutionary point of

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

view, is to keep the species completely under the spell of objective/inherent existence. A species that falsely believes that the world, and everything contained within it, is objectively real is going to be far more motivated to compete for resources and avoid predators than is the species that is beginning to have an inkling that it is all an illusion. Hence, any movement towards wisdom in the cut-and-thrust kingdom of life is nearly always nipped in the bud. It is only because human society has bucked against evolution to a degree and created a civilization in which even the "evolutionary weaker" members can survive that philosophers and sages have been able to come into existence.

This is why the enlightened person is always filled with compassion towards the human race. He understands the deep attraction of unconsciousness and the spell it casts upon people. He also understands that it is not their fault for wanting to sink into it, for not trying to fight it, for not placing value on wisdom. Nature has caused them to be the way they are, just as Nature has caused me to be the way I am. We are all innocent puppets, at bottom, whose every movement is dictated by the causal strings of Nature. It is all Nature's doing - everything. We are but passengers going along for the ride.

The compassion of the enlightened person constitutes the active expression of his wisdom, while his understanding of Reality constitutes the passive aspect. It is a compassion which is very different from the compassion of ordinary people. It focuses upon one thing and one thing only - namely, how to free people from the grip of unconsciousness and stimulate their minds into an awareness of Reality. Or in Buddhist terms, how to free people from the wheel of samsara and propel them into nirvana. And even though this is the greatest gift he could possibly bestow on other people, and the greatest way he can help them, he performs it effortlessly, with the minimum of fuss, day after day, in the spontaneity of his own endless wisdom.

But what does it mean to leave behind samsara and enter nirvana? It means ceasing to interfere with the world on any level and instead becoming one with the process of cause and effect. One no longer seeks happiness in any particular phenomenon, nor truth in any particular concept or appearance. One

is completely free of the emotional desire for the world to be any particular way. The entire process of emotionally valuing one form over another is completely abandoned. One is free of all attachment to form (and, by extension, to formlessness). And because of this, one ceases to engage in life and death.

Second Statement by Robert Larkin
February 5

In his first post David Quinn claimed enlightenment in this debate, just as he has claimed it elsewhere. Then he expounded on enlightenment, relying only on his own authority. Then he asserted that his enlightenment shouldn't be an issue in this debate. In my first post I established that Quinn is himself a reasonable subject. Not only does he claim enlightenment but he is his own support. No one in their right mind would accept on David Quinn's authority that David Quinn is enlightened. It is a rational necessity to reject his claim of enlightenment and with his claim rejected David has no foundation upon which to argue about enlightenment - he has himself implicitly argued you are not worthy to understand his material, if you are not enlightened. Now you might find his writing so compelling that you no longer require rational support to accept an argument, and if that is so then perhaps David Quinn should be your master. If that is not so, then do please acknowledge to yourself that David Quinn cannot possibly have made a case about anything so fundamentally nebulous as enlightenment by relying on David Quinn who anyway insists you cannot tell if it is valid anyway. There is no rational reason to assume you have been presented anything true. In the history of the world there have been charlatans and snake-oil salesmen galore; it is David Quinn's burden to prove otherwise, it is his burden to prove he is legitimate, else how can he make a reasonable case?

In opposition to David I made in my first post the canonically supported argument that enlightenment is ineffable; it is beyond the power of words to comprehend. Let me point out that elsewhere David has claimed to be in agreement with Nagarjuna. (Geniality Forum, *Quantum mechanics, etc* Quinn, 1/30/04 7:09 pm). Kevin Solway is also in agreement

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

with Nagarjuna. (Gentility Forum, Quantum, etc., Solway, 1/30/04 9:26 pm). Dan Rowland commented on KIR that Quinn holds Nagarjuna in "relatively" [his italics] high regard.

Nagarajuna, c. 150-250, is sometimes referred to as 'the second buddha'. (The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Nagarjuna.) It was Nagarjuna who asserted the importance of sunya and sunyata.

Nagarjuna saw in the concept sunya, a concept which connoted in the early Pali Buddhist literature the lack of a stable, inherent existence in persons, but which since the third century BCE had also denoted the newly formulated number zero, the interpretive key to the heart of Buddhist teaching, and the undoing of all the metaphysical schools of philosophy which were at the time flourishing around him. Indeed, Nagarjuna's philosophy can be seen as an attempt to deconstruct all systems of thought which analyzed the world in terms of fixed substances and essences. Things in fact lack essence, according to Nagarjuna, they have no fixed nature, and indeed it is only because of this lack of essential, immutable being that change is possible, that one thing can transform into another. Each thing can only have its existence through its lack (sunyata) of inherent, eternal essence. With this new concept of emptiness, voidness, lack of essence, zeroness, this somewhat unlikely prodigy was to help mold the vocabulary and character of Buddhist thought forever. [Ibid.]

According to Nagarjuna theory is neither the condition of practice nor the reason for practice. Instead, theory is the enemy of all legitimate forms of practice whether social, ethical, or religious. Nagarjuna would himself only enter forms of debate where the opponent's thesis was refuted while not affirming anything himself; it would have been contradictory for him to have done otherwise for he would have been affirming theory. [ibid.]

I do not ask you to agree with Nagarjuna but only to understand what he was getting at,

and that it is opposed to what David Quinn is getting at.

... Nagarjuna has rightly merited the label of skeptic, for he undertakes the dismantling of theoretical positions wherever he finds them, and does so in a methodically logical manner. Like the skeptics of the classical Greek tradition, who thought that resolved doubt about dogmatic assertions in both philosophy and social life could lead the individual to peace of mind, however, it is not the case that for Nagarjuna skepticism leads nowhere. On the contrary, it is the very key to insight. For in the process of dismantling all metaphysical and epistemological positions, one is led to the only viable conclusion for Nagarjuna, namely that all things, concepts and persons lack a fixed essence, and this lack of a fixed essence is precisely why and how they can be amenable to change, transformation and evolution. Change is precisely why people live, die, are reborn, suffer and can be enlightened and liberated. And change is only possible if entities and the way in which we conceptualize them are void or empty (sunya) of any eternal, fixed and immutable essence. ... like all properly Buddhist methods, once this logical foil has served its purpose, it can be discarded, traded in as it were for the wisdom it has conferred. Pretense of knowledge leads to ruin, while genuine skepticism can lead human being[s] to ultimate knowledge. [But] the method of skepticism has to conform to the rules of conventional knowing, for as Nagarjuna famously asserts: Without depending on convention, the ultimate truth cannot be taught, and if the ultimate truth is not attained, nirvana will not be attained. [ibid.]

Concepts have utility but they are not taken to be the truth which in Buddhism is beyond conceptualization. A concept is not truth but a signpost; a word is not the truth; the honk of a horn is not the truth - in Buddhism the truth is a different state of mind, one which can use words and concepts but which is not enchained by them. Quinn will admit that things have no inherent substance but he has failed to understand that neither do concepts! This format does not allow for interlocation but let us ask David if his formulation of enlightenment in his first post is the truth or if it is merely a relatively efficacious conceptualization. According to Nagarjuna it is the latter at best; I would bet that according to Quinn it's the truth. Again, there is no support for their position except for their 'self-validated' enlightenment which does the rest of us no good at all. Therefore in Nagarjuna

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

you have something which can be rationally accepted as representative of Buddhist opinion - again I do not ask you to agree with it but merely to understand it - but from Quinn you have nothing which can be rationally accepted as authoritative. And we now have direct confrontation between Nagarjuna and Quinn.

There is a fundamental component of David Quinn's enlightenment which he has not shared with you. One half of the world's population is automatically excluded from it: Women. In *Woman*, ironically subtitled *An Exposition for the Advanced Mind*, David began his 50 plus pages of gibberish with a condescending and sexist quotation from Nietzsche, briefly damned women with faint praise, very sincerely regretted that he must proceed to destroy women ("O, woe is the person who thinks!") and began a series of mindless analyses purportedly showing the inherent inferiority of women and their inability to think at any depth. While the name "Otto Weininger" is not present in "*Woman*" he is present in spirit. Quinn and the Trine QRS all support the Victorian gibberish Weininger espouses in *Sex and Character*, published in German 1903. Both *Woman* and *Sex and Character* are available in .pdf at [Minefield, etc.](#).

There is often a pathological tinge to the ways Quinn writes about women. One chapter in "*Exposition*" is named "Why Dissect Women?" Another chapter title is "A Peek at Sexual Intercourse".

In "Why Dissect Women?" David revealed that he explored every possible opinion between the extremes of radical feminism and traditional chauvinism and he remained convinced there is a tremendous gulf between men and women. ("*Exposition*," p.4) All we have in common is the desire for happiness but even that is deceiving because the happiness is very different, colored by the genders' psychologies, values, and worldviews and which David insists are widely disparate. (Ibid.) Men can conceive "long-term goals of genuine significance" while women are stuck with "the topsy-turvy world of the emotions." (Ibid.)

The presumed differences between men and women become "acute" when spirituality is considered. Attaining "ultimate reality", according to David, requires purpose, cour-

age, rationality, persistence, constancy, and a sense of one's destiny. These are all for unspecified reasons masculine attributes and there are no aspects of femininity which will suit one in the search for spirituality. (Ibid., p.5) Women have no feeling for the ultimate, David suggested, and if we mentioned "Truth" to a woman she would stare back as if she had no idea what we meant. Since a feminine upbringing long ago closed her to such possibilities she is left with finding her truths in the emotional world. (Ibid.)

If one is going to transcend everything one must renounce everything for the sake of truth, in David's view, and completely. David does not think we could find a woman who would be willing to live for truth. He insists women are oblivious to the notion of truth let alone the significance, said significance to be assumed. (Ibid.)

Most men lead mediocre lives and are little better than women, David wrote, yet on the whole men are much nearer his ideal than are women. The enlightened one suggested that while only a small percentage of the male population have potential for wisdom it is nonetheless true that there is hardly a single female who could claim any potential for it. (Ibid.)

David admitted these are harsh facts for women to face. While he acknowledged there are a few women with "the genuine seeds of idealism" he then said it would be worst on them. Nature, according to David, unfairly discriminated against women and he was sad there was nothing at present to be done, women necessarily remaining "the happy, charming, mindless creatures they are." (Ibid, p. 6)

David noted in the introduction to the gibberish that it was no scientific or philosophical work and which obviated support of a single ridiculous assertion. Pontifications and pronouncements are the Quinn style.

David thinks Otto Weininger was a genius. [Genius Forum, Welcome Message](#). David calls himself a thinker who follows Diogenes, the Buddha, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jesus, and Otto Weininger. Kevin Solway says of Weininger's book, *Sex and Character*, published in German in 1903, "This book is one of the few masterpieces of modern times. Here, Weininger overflows with profound insight, deepest love, and

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

awesome courage..." Solway is even selling a translation of Weininger's thoughts, Aphorisms From Weininger's Notebooks. (See *Minefield*, etc.) Searches on 'weininger' invariably bring up Solway's various websites. And Dan Rowland, the third of the resident geniuses at the Genius Forum, also agrees on Weininger's genius. (Genius Forum, *What Is Genius?*.) Rowland includes in his list of geniuses the Buddha, Jesus, Lao Tzu, Kierkegaard, Socrates Nietzsche, and Otto Weininger, taking the trouble to note that Bach and Einstein were not geniuses. What is genius on the Genius Forum? Included in Dan's list of characteristics are independence of mind and insightfulness as well as wisdom and which are qualities lacking in Otto Weininger.

Weininger shot himself at age 23, going to the room where Beethoven died to do it, shortly after the publication of *Sex and Character*. Hitler said of him, "There was only one wise Jew, and he shot himself." Despite being a great genius Britannica gives him very little coverage.

[Born] April 3, 1880, Vienna

[Died] Oct. 4, 1903, Vienna

Austrian philosopher whose single work, *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903; *Sex and Character*), served as a sourcebook for anti-Semitic propagandists.

The son of a prosperous Jewish artisan, Weininger became a Christian the day he received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Vienna (1902). The following year he published his partly scientific, partly philosophical study in which he advanced the thesis that all living things combined varying proportions of masculine and feminine elements. The masculine element was positive, productive, and moral, while the feminine was negative, unproductive, and amoral. In the chapter *ber das Judentum*, he denounced Judaism as feminine and amoral in contrast to Christianity. Weininger shot himself at the age of 23, shortly after the publication of *Geschlecht und Charakter*.*

Because we have already read Quinn on women let's read a bit of Weininger on race

and we can have Weininger on women in the rebuttals.

There are ... nations and races whose men, though they can in no wise be regarded as intermediate forms of the sexes, are found to approach so slightly and so rarely to the ideal of manhood as set forth in my argument, that the principles, indeed the entire foundation on which this work rests, would seem to be severely shaken by their existence. What shall we make, for example, of the Chinese, with their feminine freedom from internal cravings and their incapacity for every effort? One might feel tempted to believe in the complete effeminacy of the whole race. It can at least be no mere whim of entire nation that the Chinaman habitually wears a pigtail and that the growth of his beard is of the very thinnest. But how does the matter stand with the negroes? A genius has perhaps scarcely ever appeared amongst the Negroes, and the standard of their morality is almost universally low that it is beginning to be acknowledged in America that their emancipation was an act of imprudence.

If consequently, the principal of the intermediate forms of the sexes may perhaps enjoy a prospect of becoming of importance to racial anthropology (since in some peoples a greater share of womanishness would seem to be generally disseminated), it must yet be conceded that the foregoing deductions refer above all to Aryan men and Aryan women. In how far, in the other great races of mankind, uniformity with the standard of the Aryan race may reign, or what has prevented and hindered this; to arrive more nearly at such knowledge would require in the first instance the most intense research into racial characteristics.

The Jewish race, which has been chosen by me as a subject of discussion, because, as will be shown, it presents the gravest and most formidable difficulties for my views, appears to possess a certain anthropological relationship with both negroes and Mongolians. The readily curling hair points to the negro; admixture of Mongolian blood is suggested by the perfectly Chinese or Malay formation of face and skull which is so often to be met with amongst the Jews and which is associated with a yellowish complexion. (*Sex and Culture*, 1906, p. 184-5)

... some reflection will lead to the surprising result that Judaism is saturated with femininity, with precisely those qualities the essence of which I have shown to be in the strongest opposition to the male nature. It would not be difficult to make a case for the view that the Jew is more saturated with femininity than the Aryan, to such an extent that the most manly Jew is more feminine than the least manly Aryan.

This interpretation would be erroneous. It is most important to lay stress on the agreements

* "Otto Weininger" Encyclop dia Britannica from Encyclop dia Britannica Premium Service. Available at:
<<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=7848>
0> [Accessed February 5, 2004].

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

and differences simply because so many points that become obvious if[n] dissecting woman re-appear in the Jew. (Ibid., p. 187)

... Greatness is absent from the nature of the woman and the Jew, the greatness of morality, or the greatness of evil. In the Aryan man, the good and bad principles of Kant's religious philosophy are ever present, ever in strife. In the Jew and the woman, good and evil are not distinct from one another. (Ibid., p. 189)

David Quinn's enlightenment, and the enlightenment of the entire QRS Trine, is sexist and racist. They have declared Weininger a genius and Solway even has a financial interest in propagating Weininger's thinking.

Two free samples of Solway's translation:

"Woman reaches as far as desire, but not to value. She reaches as far as sympathy, but not respect.

"The Jew's sin is smirking at the Good, as the simpleton's sin is smirking at wisdom."

As David Quinn supports racist and sexist materials I urge you to reject his ideas out of hand. It is not likely Hitler knew what was enlightenment, nor Weininger, nor Quinn, Rowland, and Solway. That material is reprehensible.

First Rebuttal by David Quinn

February 6

Well, well, it's all coming out now . . .

I suppose it was too much to expect a balanced debate when there are so many emotional people around whipping themselves into a frenzy over views that they do not even begin to understand, nor have any intention of trying to understand.

But I suppose that is the human race for you. It is to be expected. I will ignore Robert's insane, frothing-at-the-mouth charges that I promote anti-semitism and racism, and concentrate instead on the topic at hand, which is enlightenment.

Robert is evidently very disturbed by my association with the concept of "enlightenment". This is the deep-rooted cause of his hysterical smear campaign against me (and,

by extension, my fellow colleagues). He thinks that I am appropriating a precious concept and sully it with my heretical ideas. He doesn't like the fact that I claim to go beyond scripture and tradition and everything that has come before, and enjoy instead a direct connection to the highest wisdom. To him, that is the very height of arrogance. It ignores all the rules of "how things are done".

According to Robert's view of life, we are all supposed to conform to other people's ideas and to society in general. One's personal knowledge has to accord with society's knowledge, One's behaviour and values has to accord with society's behaviour and values. Robert is a numbers man; to him, a view is only valid to the degree that it is popular and fashionable, especially among the intellectual elite. Any deviancy, any movement towards individuality, no matter how motivated by reason, is automatically deemed a form of quackery.

We can observe this impulse all throughout Robert's writing. We can see it, for example, in his constant desire to drag this debate back into the communal realm of the Buddhist scriptures. Instead of addressing my points directly with reasoned argument, Robert instead wants to hide behind the coat-tails of Nagarjuna, whom he boasts is the "second Buddha". This shows that Robert has no desire to think for himself. He wants Nagarjuna to do all the thinking for him. Even though Robert has no idea whether Nagarjuna is even qualified to speak about enlightenment, he nevertheless sets him up on a pedestal and parades him to the world as a great spiritual authority. And why? Not because he knows that Nagarjuna is enlightened and therefore really is a great spiritual authority, but simply because he knows that lots of other people have blindly conformed to the societal view that he is enlightened. This is the fallacy called "validation by popular appeal".

It has been remarked by Robert, and backed up by Guildenstern and Thomas Knierim in the commentary thread, that we do not need to know whether Nagarjuna was enlightened, or whether the Buddhist sutras are expressions of wisdom. We only need to know that enlightenment is a Buddhist concept, and this alone enables us to compare

* [From] "A small sample of Aphorisms From Weininger's Notebooks," Translated from the German by Martin Dudaniec and Kevin Solway - Copyright Solway & Dudaniec, 2000. Nazis on the Net.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

any modern claim of enlightenment with the historical descriptions of enlightenment contained in the sutras. In this way, we have an objective criterion by which to measure claims of enlightenment.

There are two main problems with this point of view:

Firstly, it overlooks the fact that "enlightenment" was actually a Hindu conception which had been in existence long before the Buddha's lifetime. Indeed, the Buddha himself was a maverick who broke away from the traditional way of doing things and formed his own ideas about enlightenment. He even appropriated the Hindu term, "buddha", which was already in currency at the time and redefined it for his own purposes. So if Robert and Guildenstern and Thomas are to be consistent, then they should reject the whole of Buddhism on the grounds that it conflicts with the earlier teachings of Hinduism. And they would probably have to reject the whole of Hinduism as well, on the grounds that it too maverickly evolved out of an earlier belief-system.

Indeed, there is a lot of irony in their position. The fact that conventional, orthodox men such as Robert, Guildenstern and Thomas would turn to an unconventional, unorthodox maverick such as the Buddha for support in their opposition to an unconventional, unorthodox maverick such as myself is extremely comical. After all, the Buddha committed the very same "crimes" that I have! He too rejected the traditions of the past. He too claimed enlightenment by his own authority. He too redefined traditional concepts for his own purposes. I can just imagine earlier incarnations of Robert, Guildenstern and Thomas, living during that period as conventional, orthodox brahmins, castigating the Buddha for his individualistic ways. Now they want him on their side!

The second problem is that even if we all agree that the Buddhist sutras are valid texts written by enlightened sages, there is still the problem of interpretation. I've already made this point in my opening statement. Words are not fixed containers of meaning. They only mean what they are interpreted to mean, whether it be by the speaker himself or his listeners. Unless the listeners are of "one mind" with the speaker, they are bound to misinterpret him. And the only way that a

listener can be of "one mind" with an enlightened author is by becoming enlightened himself.

Because Robert, Guildenstern and Thomas correctly claim they are unenlightened and therefore not of "one mind" with past Buddhist sages, they are tacitly admitting (even though they will never consciously own up to this) that their interpretation of Buddhist scripture is incorrect. Thus, any attempt on their part to isolate "objective criteria" from the Buddhist sutras in order to assess what constitutes enlightened behaviour and what doesn't is doomed from the start. They cannot even begin to get the ball rolling.

This issue has probably been thrashed out long enough and it is time to move on. But before I do, I just want to make a final observation about my claim to enlightenment.

Even though I do present myself to the world as an enlightened man, I do not expect other people to accept this on blind faith. In fact, I would be horrified if that were to happen. For it would mean the emergence of religion, and, if there is one thing I cannot stand in this world, it is religion. What I do expect from people is, not blind submission to authority, but for them to make every effort to comprehend Reality and become enlightened themselves. If my words and ideas can help stimulate them into this enterprise, then that's great. And if they are inspired by other people's ideas in a similar way, then that's great too. I see my role in life as one of contributing to the pool of wisdom and helping people make further advances in their thinking. I have no interest in financially profiting from this, nor in building a cult religion around me. I engage in it, rather, because I consider it to be the most important work on earth.

Now for the second part of Robert's essay ...

It was inevitable that Robert would bring up the woman issue. He was floundering with respect to the rest of my thought and obviously saw the woman issue as a sure-fire tactic to "win" the debate. Everyone knows that, in these modern times, being "anti-woman" in any way is akin to being a serious criminal. Robert evidently believed that he only had to mention my stance on women and that would be enough to drive the sword in me and in-

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

flict the fatal wound. He could then sit back and revel in the resulting acclaim.

This explains why his handling of the woman issue was insubstantial and lazy. Although he quoted me at length and made clear his opposition, he offered no reasons or evidence to back up his stance. He offered no reasons as to why he thinks men and woman are mentally similar, nor why he thinks they are on equal footing when it comes to higher matters - even though both points are very debatable. The only thing he offered was that he thought my views were "gibberish", which isn't exactly a reasoned argument.

It was as if he believed that all he had to do was lay out a few of my comments about women on the table and that would be enough. Everyone would instantly think, "Oh my God, David Quinn is truly demented! His views are so politically-incorrect and unfashionable that Robert is perfectly right in not bothering to argue against them. What more is there to say?"

As for Otto Weininger's views on race, I personally don't take them too seriously. Weininger was essentially a young, experimental thinker who loved nothing more than to explore psychological realities in unusual ways. His attempt to fathom the psychology of each race was a part of this. Like all good experimentalists, he wasn't overly concerned if his observations and generalizations turned out to be incorrect. He treated them as philosophical tools for initiating further exploration, rather than as iron-clad truths. He liked to use these generalizations, and hundreds of other generalizations besides, to stimulate deeper insight into the workings of the human mind. This was an aspect of his genius that is not fully understood or appreciated by those who like to hysterically jump on him and label him a sick man. Their indignant huffing and puffing blinds them to what he was really on about.

In fact, this pretty much sums up Robert's whole approach to this debate. Instead of plying us with reasoned argument in an intelligent manner, we have had to endure a steady stream of huffing and puffing. Robert doesn't really understand my point of view, nor does he have any desire to understand it. Because of this, his contributions in this debate have so far been a curious mixture of fishing blindly in the dark and slinging what-

ever mud he can find in my general direction. It is not very edifying.

In finishing off, I would like to analyze the following argument by Robert:

In opposition to David I made in my first post the canonically supported argument that enlightenment is ineffable; it is beyond the power of words to comprehend . . . It was Nagarjuna who asserted the importance of sunya and sunyata:

Nagarjuna saw in the concept sunya, a concept which connoted in the early Pali Buddhist literature the lack of a stable, inherent existence in persons, but which since the third century BCE had also denoted the newly formulated number zero, the interpretive key to the heart of Buddhist teaching, and the undoing of all the metaphysical schools of philosophy which were at the time flourishing around him. Indeed, Nagarjuna's philosophy can be seen as an attempt to deconstruct all systems of thought which analyzed the world in terms of fixed substances and essences. Things in fact lack essence, according to Nagarjuna, they have no fixed nature, and indeed it is only because of this lack of essential, immutable being that change is possible, that one thing can transform into another. Each thing can only have its existence through its lack (sunyata) of inherent, eternal essence. With this new concept of emptiness, voidness, lack of essence, zeroness, this somewhat unlikely prodigy was to help mold the vocabulary and character of Buddhist thought forever. - *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Here is a classic example of deluded men (both Robert and the author of the article above) projecting their own deluded interpretations upon a wise teaching given by Nagarjuna. The concept of sunyata does not refer to the supposed ineffable nature of enlightenment, nor does it even support such a notion. The concept of sunyata specifically refers to the nature of Reality (emptiness) which Nagarjuna spent his whole life describing in great detail - using words no less. There is nothing even remotely "ineffable" about this and Robert's insistence that Nagarjuna was trying to teach this message is wrong.

Nor does the number zero have anything to do with the concept of sunyata. After all,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Gautama Siddharta and many Hindu sages before him were perfectly capable of comprehending the nature of emptiness without any help from the Greeks and their numbering system. It should be stressed that sunyata (emptiness) does not mean "nothingness" or "zeroness". "Nothingness is a dualistic entity which can only find its existence in contrast to "something". Being a duality, it cannot be applied to the nature of Reality. Reality is beyond all attempts to straightjacket in this way. It is neither something, nor nothing. It neither exists, nor not-exists. It is neither real, nor illusory.

The person who comprehends this great truth, and who opens up his entire being to it, is perfectly able to think about it, probe it, analyze it, and fully express it in words, just as Nagarjuna has done. It is only ignorant people who keep harping on about the ineffableness of enlightenment, or the indescribability of Reality. It may be indescribable to them, yes. But not to the enlightened person who knows it like the back of his hand.

Rebuttal by Robert Larkin

February 7

[*Gibberish*], according to the New Oxford, means "unintelligible or meaningless speech or writing; nonsense". The New Oxford Thesaurus gives us "NONSENSE, rubbish, balderdash, blather, blether; informal drivel, gobbledegook, mumbo-jumbo, rot, tripe, hogwash, baloney, bilge, bosh, bull, bunk, guff, eyewash, piffle, twaddle, poppycock, phooey, hooey, malarkey, dribble; ..."

David Quinn's mere assertions in *Woman, An Exposition for the Advanced Mind* are nonsense on the face of it. There is not a reason in the world to believe a single word of it. When challenged on it, Quinn wrote:

It was inevitable that Robert would bring up the woman issue. He was floundering with respect to the rest of my thought and obviously saw the woman issue as a sure-fire tactic to "win" the debate. Everyone knows that, in these modern times, being "anti-woman" in any way is akin to being a serious criminal. Robert evidently believed that he only had to mention my stance on women and that

would be enough to drive the sword in me and inflict the fatal wound. He could then sit back and revel in the resulting acclaim.

This explains why his handling of the woman issue was insubstantial and lazy. Although he quoted me at length and made clear his opposition, he offered no reasons or evidence to back up his stance. He offered no reasons as to why he thinks men and woman are mentally similar, nor why he thinks they are on equal footing when it comes to higher matters - even though both points are very debatable. The only thing he offered was that he thought my views were "gibberish", which isn't exactly a reasoned argument.

If "gibberish" is an overstatement, why is that so? His writing is absurd on the face of it. Quinn supports nothing in the material I quoted. If the material is unsupported it cannot stand. It is not then my burden to attack material which does not stand in the first place. Let Quinn support his own ideas.

But do not support it with the "theories" of Otto Weininger, himself a source for Nazi thinking as referenced above. Weininger is supported by Quinn, Rowden, and Solway who consider him a spiritual genius when in fact he was a tortured self-loathing Jewish anti-Semite and misogynist whose gibberish has been quoted above and which you should certainly have read. Is it not gibberish or do you insist that gibberish must be complete nonsense rather than, e.g., racist material which having a coherent structure cannot therefore be gibberish? I am myself more generous with its usage.

Omer Bartov, Professor of History at Rutgers, wrote:

Obsession with "The Jew Within" was also the lot of many assimilated and even baptized Jews, who often internalized the anti-Semitic imagery of their environment and consequently held a highly ambivalent perception of their own identity. This could be expressed in self-torment and ultimate self-destruction, as was illustrated, for instance, in the celebrated case of Otto Weininger. (17)

(17) ... Weininger, who committed suicide in Vienna in 1903 at the age of twenty-four, was the author of *Geschelect und Charakter* (Vienna, 1903), translated as *Sex and Character*, (New York, 1908), which presented

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Judaism as an extreme manifestation of the feminine principle, about to clash with Aryanism, the manifestation of the masculine principle. According to Weininger, Zionism embodied all that was good and noble in the Jewish soul, but it would be defeated from within by Judaism, which would return the Jews to their natural place: Destruction and the Diaspora. Rejected by Sigmund Freud, obsessed by the "Jewish principle" within himself (which led him to convert to Protestantism in 1902), and devastated by the cool reception of his book (based on his Ph.D. dissertation in philosophy, and subsequently a sensational best-seller), Weininger shot himself in the same room where Beethoven had died. On Jewish, and especially Zionist, preoccupation with degeneration around the turn of the century, see, for example, John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siecle Europe* (New Haven, Conn., 1994); ... Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore, Md., 1986).

"Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust", Omer Bartov, educated at Tel Aviv University and Oxford, now Professor of History at Rutgers, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 3. (Jun., 1998), p. 781

If Weininger is not now entirely a footnote in history it is only because he was devastated by the reception of his book and shot himself in the room where Beethoven died, a pathetic claim to genius. But whether Weininger was "a case of neurosis arising from unresolved castration anxiety" as Freud suggested, or a schizophrenic as Martin Abrahamson, M.D., author of the first full-scale study of Weininger's life suggested in 1946 (both found in Misha Kavka, *The "Al-luring Abyss of Nothingness": Misogyny and (Male) Hysteria in Otto Weininger*, *New German Critique*, No. 66, Special Issue on the Nineteenth Century, (Autumn, 1995), p. 126.), or a self-loathing anti-Semite so insistent he was a genius that he killed himself in the room where Beethoven died in a pathetic attempt to prove the point, it is true that Otto Weininger was a product of his time, Jewish fin-de-siecle Vienna, and his time is long past. The Nazis, who made use of his ideas (see *Britannica*, cited above), are long gone. We have now three self-proclaimed enlightened individuals and particularly in Kevin Solway, the "S" in "The QRS", who campaign for Weininger's restoration in the

public eye as a "spiritual genius". Since the information on Weininger appearing in the debate is publicly available, whether direct quotations from Weininger's book and which has been made available to all of you, or analysis written after his death, it is the responsibility of Quinn and his "fellow colleagues" to explain why they were not aware of it or why they chose to ignore it. Weininger's writings can be seen now to be half-witted and purely the products of his time and his own lamentable psychology.

The commentary thread has obviously influenced the course of the debate by creating focus on 'self-validation'. I have from the start questioned David's ongoing validation of himself in light of the rational necessity that we reject his authority. In his second post David openly took up the issue and insisted that self-validation is legitimate although what he is legitimizing is only the concept that we are in no position to question his pronouncements on enlightenment.

Self-validation is the only method possible. Even if a reputed enlightened master were to come up to you and confirm you as an enlightened being, you would still have to ascertain in your own mind whether he possessed the credentials to make such a judgment. That is to say, you would have to confirm him first. And to do that properly, you would need to be enlightened. - David, second post

But that has nothing to do with the problem here. David is insisting he must validate his own enlightenment. Our problem is as rational thinkers, what do we make of David Quinn? His self-validation does us no good since we are hardly David Quinn validating ourselves.

In the last post I pointed out that David Quinn is, according to David Quinn, in agreement with Nagarjuna;

The Logicians, upon becoming aware very early of Nagarjuna's thought, brought against his position of emptiness (*sunyata*) a sharp criticism. Certainly no claim, they insisted, should compel us to give it assent unless it can be known to be true. Now Nagarjuna has told us that emptiness is the lack of a fixed, essential nature which all things exhibit. But if all things are empty of a fixed nature, then that would include, would it not, Nagarjuna's own claim that

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

all things are empty? For one to say that all things lack a fixed nature would be also to say that no assertion, no thesis like Nagarjuna's that all things are empty, could claim hold on a fixed reference. And if such a basic and all-encompassing thesis must admit of having itself neither a fixed meaning nor reference, then why should we believe it? Does not rather the thesis all things lack a fixed essence, and are thus empty, since it is a universal quantifier and so covers all things including theses, refute itself? The Logicians are not so much making the claim here that skepticism necessarily opts out of its own position, as when a person in saying I know nothing witnesses unwittingly to at least a knowledge of two things, namely how to use language and his own ignorance, as in the cases of the Socratic Irony and the Liar's Paradox. It is more the direct charge that a philosophy which refuses to admit universal essences must be flatly self-contradictory, since a universal denial must itself be essentially true of all things. Should we not consider Nagarjuna as a person who, setting out on what would otherwise be an ingenious and promising philosophical journey, in a bit too much of a rush, tripped over his own feet on his way out the front door?

Nagarjuna, in *The End of Disputes*, responds in two ways. The first is an attempt to show the haughty Logicians that, if they really critically examine this fundamental concept of proof which grounds their theory of knowledge, they will find themselves in no better position than they claim Nagarjuna is in. How, Nagarjuna asks in an extended argument, can anything be proven to a fixed certainty in the way the Naiyayikas posit? When you get right down to it, a putative fact can be proven in only two ways; it is either self-evident or it is shown to be true by something else, by some other fact or piece of knowledge already assumed to be true. But if we assent to the very rules of logic and valid argument the Vedic Logicians espouse, we shall find, Nagarjuna thinks, that both of these suppositions are flawed. Let us take the claim that something can be proven to be true on the basis of other facts known to be true. Suppose, to use a favorite example from the Logician Gautama, I want to know how much an object weighs. I put it on a scale to measure its weight. The scale gives me a result, and for a moment that satisfies me; I can rely on the measurement because scales can measure weight. But hold on, Nagarjuna flags, your reliance on the trustworthiness of the scale is itself an assumption, not a piece of knowledge. Shouldn't the scale be tested too? I measure the object on a second scale to test the accuracy of the first scale, and the measurement agrees with the first scale. But how can I just assume, once again, that the second scale is accurate? Both scales might be wrong. And the exercise goes

on, there is nothing in principle which would justify me in assuming that any one test I use to verify a piece of knowledge is itself reliable beyond doubt. So, Nagarjuna concludes, the supposition that something can be proven through reference to some other putative fact runs into the problem that the series of proofs will never reach an end, and leaves us with an infinite regress. Should we commit ourselves to the opposite justification and propound that we know things to be true which are self-evident, then Nagarjuna would counter that we would be making a vacuous claim. The whole point of epistemology is to discover reliable methods of knowing, which implies that on the side of the world there are facts and on the side of the knower there are proofs which make those facts transparent to human consciousness. Were things just self-evident, proof would be superfluous, we should just know straightaway whether something is such and such or not. The claim of self-evidence destroys, in an ironic fashion which always pleased Nagarjuna, the very need for a theory of knowledge!

Nagarjuna, rejecting the self-evident, insists that all things and concepts are empty, including his own. If you have bothered to read the running conversation on the "Genius Forum" linked above and made part of this debate, then after reading the passage immediately above you must observe that Quinn and Solway are taking the parts of the Logicians (Naiyayikas) and not the part of Nagarjuna. Yet it is also a part of this debate that both Quinn and Solway have claimed to be in agreement with Nagarjuna. Both cannot be true and as you have access to commentary on Nagarjuna, the reasonable conclusion is that Quinn and Solway, despite their claims of enlightenment and that they agree with Nagarjuna, simply do not understand Nagarjuna.

Solway complained in the commentary thread that Nagarjuna was not directly quoted.

We say that this understanding of yours
Of emptiness and the purpose of emptiness
And of the significance of emptiness is incorrect.
As a consequence you are harmed by it.

The Buddha's teaching of the Dharma
Is based on two truths:
A truth of worldly convention

* Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Nagarjuna.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

And an ultimate truth.

Those who do not understand
The distinction drawn between these two truths
Do not understand
The Buddha's profound truth.

Without a foundation in the conventional truth,
The significance of the ultimate cannot be taught.
Without understanding the significance of the ultimate,
Liberation is not achieved.

By a misperception of emptiness
A person of little intelligence is destroyed.* ...

Quinn wrote in his second post,

The compassion of the enlightened person constitutes the active expression of his wisdom, while his understanding of Reality constitutes the passive aspect. It is a compassion which is very different from the compassion of ordinary people. It focuses upon one thing and one thing only - namely, how to free people from the grip of unconsciousness and stimulate their minds into an awareness of Reality. Or in Buddhist terms, how to free people from the wheel of samsara and propel them into nirvana. And even though this is the greatest gift he could possibly bestow on other people, and the greatest way he can help them, he performs it effortlessly, with the minimum of fuss, day after day, in the spontaneity of his own endless wisdom.

But what does it mean to leave behind samsara and enter nirvana? It means ceasing to interfere with the world on any level and instead becoming one with the process of cause and effect. One no longer seeks happiness in any particular phenomenon, nor truth in any particular concept or appearance. One is completely free of the emotional desire for the world to be any particular way. The entire process of emotionally valuing one form over another is completely abandoned. One is free of all attachment to form (and, by extension, to formlessness). And because of this, one ceases to engage in life and death.

Again, this is at best only conventionally accurate and it is in fact not accurate. The Internet commentary, linked above, notes:

To be a Buddhist means precisely to distinguish between Buddhist and non-Buddhist acts, between ignorance and enlightenment, between

the suffering world of samsara and the purified attainment of nirvana.

In his revolutionary tract of *The Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way*, Nagarjuna abjectly throws this elementary distinction between samsara and nirvana out the door, and does so in the very name of the Buddha. There is not the slightest distinction, he declares in the work, between samsara and nirvana. The limit of the one is the limit of the other. Now how can such a thing be posited, that is, the identity of samsara and nirvana, without totally undermining the theoretical basis and practical goals of Buddhism as such? For if there is no difference between the world of suffering and the attainment of peace, then what sort of work is a Buddhist to do as one who seeks to end suffering? Nagarjuna counters by reminding the Buddhist philosophers that, just as Gautama Sakya-muni had rejected both metaphysical and empirical substantialism through the teaching of no-soul (anatman) and causal interdependence (pratityasamutpada), so Scholastic Buddhism had to remain faithful to this non-substantialist stance through a rejection of the causal theories which necessitated notions of fixed nature (svabhava), theories which metaphysically reified the difference between samsara and nirvana. This later rejection could be based on Nagarjuna's newly coined notion of the emptiness, zeroness or voidness (sunyata) of all things.

Nagarjuna himself:

So, when the victorious one abides, he
Is neither said to be existent
Nor said to be nonexistent.
Neither both nor neither are said.

There is not the slightest difference
Between cyclic existence and nirvana.
There is not the slightest difference
Between nirvana and cyclic existence.

Whatever is the limit of nirvana,
That is the limit of cyclic existence.
There is not even the slightest difference between them,
Or even the subtlest thing.

Views that after cessation there is a limit, etc.,
And that it is permanent, etc.,
Depend upon Nirvana, the final limit,
And the prior limit.

Since all existents are empty,
What is finite or infinite?
What is finite and infinite?
What is neither finite nor infinite?

What is identical and what is different?

* Nagarjuna, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, tr. Jay L. Garfield, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 68.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

What is permanent and what is impermanent?
What is both permanent and impermanent?
What is neither?

The pacification of all objectification
And the pacification of illusion:
No Dharma was taught by the Buddha
At any time, in any place, to any person.*

The two final lines are liberating: Not even the Buddha could preach more than conventional truth. Assuming the (conventional) accuracy of my observations, then either one of two (conventional) descriptions of Quinn and Solway must also be accurate: They are dishonest or they are ignorant.

David wrote in his last post, "Even though I do present myself to the world as an enlightened man, I do not expect other people to accept this on blind faith." Let us consider an enlightened man as expressed in the behavior of David Quinn.

In his most recent post David Quinn fell apart, accusing some of the membership of being so emotional over concepts Quinn presumes they cannot understand that there is no possibility of a 'fair' debate. Then belying his emotional superior he actually wrote, "I will ignore Robert's insane, frothing-at-the-mouth charges that I promote anti-semitism and racism, and concentrate instead on the topic at hand, which is enlightenment." I have in fact pointed out that the Holy Trine "The QRS" promote Weininger, who was an anti-semitite, but the distinction is apparently too subtle for them. Beyond that, note that hysterical content of 'insane, frothing-at-the-mouth charges ..."

After announcing his intent to concentrate on the topic at hand, enlightenment, David's next paragraph was:

Robert is evidently very disturbed by my association with the concept of "enlightenment". This is the deep-rooted cause of his hysterical smear campaign against me (and, by extension, my fellow colleagues). He thinks that I am appropriating a precious concept and sullyng it with my heretical ideas. He doesn't like the fact that I claim to go beyond scripture and tradition and everything that has come before, and enjoy instead a direct connection to the highest wisdom. To him, that is the very height of arro-

gance. It ignores all the rules of "how things are done".

The enlightened man has become very distracted by Robert, the supposed author of 'insane, frothing-at-the-mouth charges' and if that were so, the authoring of insane changes and with or without the froth, Robert could be easily ignored, especially when one had announced the intent to return to the topic at hand, and which, David had forgotten, was enlightenment. Instead the topics of that paragraph included David's analysis of the reasons he thinks I am engaging in a supposed hysterical smear campaign. I have discussed with you Otto Weininger, and where is any smear and where is any hysteria? And does David actually believe I give a hoot in hell about whether he is so deluded he thinks he has a direct connection to "the highest wisdom"? "Men who support idiots like Weininger" and "the highest wisdom" are contradictions. It took Quinn several more paragraphs of ridiculous assertions - I am no "numbers man" and I know no one who thinks I am - to finally return to the topic.

Based on David Quinn's behavior the enlightened man is vain, announcing you cannot possibly understand him; he stubbornly clings to failed concepts like 'self-validation'; he claims to understand things he obviously does not, like Nagarjuna; he brings with him a troop of zombie disciples who mindlessly repeat his delusions; he makes pretentious claims that he knows Reality like the back of his hand; he falls apart before your eyes, and he can neither think nor debate worth spit. I asked in my first post, "Despite David's suggestion he is beyond your criticism I ask you to consider if what you witnessed from David is likely the behavior of an enlightened man, or alternatively, if that is enlightenment would you want it?"

Nagarjuna dedicated The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way by writing:

I prostrate to the Perfect Buddha,
The best of teachers, who taught that
Whatever is dependently arisen is
Unceasing, unborn,
Unassimilated, not permanent,
Not coming, not going,

* Ibid., pp. 75-6

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Without distinction, without identity,
And free from conceptual construction.*

The last line is not understood by David Quinn and his fellow Trine members although that is not the only reason they do not know whereof they speak. Freedom really is freedom, in Nagarjuna's conception. There is no Buddha required to sanctimoniously play 'vessel of truth' and how much less so individuals who have so clearly demonstrated their blindness.

Thank you all, and particular thanks to my dear friend Jens for research, and for insightful comments in the companion thread including some of those by Natyryl, Victor Danilchenko, Thomas Knierem, Guidentstern, alarabi, and Bene Tleilax except where he called me silly. If there was an omission it was not intentional.

Final Rebuttal by David Quinn
February 8

I pay homage to the perfection of Nature and her glorious wisdom!

I bow down to the Buddhas and enlightened sages of all eras the ages, who, free from all attachment and delusion, patiently taught the difficult, hard-to-discern Truth so that others may find their freedom.

I adore all of you who bravely stand up and announce their commitment to wisdom at the risk of being mocked and persecuted by their fellow human beings.

Without you, this world would be in complete darkness.

From the Dhammapada:

- A man is not on the path of righteousness if he settles matters in a violent haste. A wise man calmly considers what is right and what is wrong, and faces different opinions with truth, non-violence and peace. This man is guarded by truth and is a guardian of truth. He is righteous and he is wise.

- Never speak harsh words, for once spoken they may return to you. Angry words are painful and there may be blows for blows.

- The wise man who by watchfulness conquers thoughtlessness is as one who free from sorrows ascends the palace of wisdom and there, from its high terrace, sees those in sor-

row below; even as a wise strong man on the holy mountain might behold the many unwise far down below on the plain.

- Few cross the river of time and are able to reach NIRVANA. Most of them run up and down only on this side of the river.

- Those who are for ever watchful, who study themselves day and night, and who wholly strive for NIRVANA, all their passions pass away.

- Who can trace the invisible path of the man who soars in the sky of liberation, the infinite Void without beginning, whose passions are peace, and over whom pleasures have no power? His path is as difficult to trace as that of the birds in the air.

- But the man whose mind, filled with determination, is longing for the infinite NIRVANA, and who is free from sensuous pleasures, is called uddham-soto, "he who goes upstream", for against the current of passions and worldly life he is bound for the joy of the infinite.

Hello all,

This is the last entry of what has been, in many ways, a fascinating debate. Although it may have fallen short on a purely intellectual level, it was more than compensated by the epic dramas surrounding it, which yielded many fascinating insights into human psychology. I hope everyone in the forum got as much out of it as I have.

I've decided that I am not going to pay any attention to Robert's views on Weininger. It is clear that he has no interest in understanding Weininger's thoughts or his approach to philosophy. His charge that Weininger was anti-semitic is laughable. Anybody who reads Sex and Character with an open mind would see that Weininger was too analytical, too explorative, too experimental, too young-in-mind, too changing and too unformed to be accused of anything of much at all, apart from having a zealous desire to go beyond convention and pursue unusual lines of thought. Perhaps if he had lived another ten or twenty years we would have had the chance to see his "real" views emerge and we could then judge whether he was anti-semitic or not. But since he put an end to that possibility rather abruptly, it will always be empty speculation.

I put it to the members of this forum that Robert's obsession with the anti-semitic issue is simply a tacit admission that he is totally out of his depth as far as the discussion on enlightenment is concerned. He is trying to

* Garfield, *ibid*.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

use the issue as a smokescreen, to distract our attention from the fact that he is losing the debate badly. He thinks that by exploiting such an emotionally-charged issue he will win some easy votes and get the crowd on his side. It is a tactic commonly used by politicians to alter public perception to their advantage. By demonizing their opponents with every kind of slander possible, regardless of whether any of it is true or not, they are able to score cheap points and avoid close scrutiny of their own policies. To my mind, Robert is very much the politician, someone who focuses on exploiting people's fears and emotions, and stirring up outrage against carefully-chosen scapegoats.

This was Hitler's special skill, in fact. He used to whip up crowds into a frenzy by adopting self-righteous poses and snarling at the "despicable" members of humanity. It is hard to see the difference between Robert's frothing-at-the-mouth torrent of invectives and Hitler's frothing-at-the-mouth speeches at rallies. In both cases, a group of people are demonized, painted as retarded and mentally ill, and virtually told that they barely deserve to live - all for the sake of trying to win a popularity contest. It's pitiful. I'm not saying that Robert is on the same level as Hitler (Robert is far too timid for that), but there are striking similarities in their psychology.

My relationship to Weininger is often misunderstood. In truth, he has had very little influence on my views. I was already a very deep thinker with many years experience before discovering his work. Indeed, my woman essays, *The Exposition for the Advanced Mind*, were written in 1990, a good five years beforehand. Since I had already formulated my views on women, my attitude towards Weininger has never been one of worshipful adoration, but rather as that of a colleague and kindred spirit. In many ways, I regard Weininger as a younger brother. A brilliant, wild, fearless younger brother, not entirely perfect, occasionally given to error, still in the grip of the romance of youth, but nevertheless a breath of fresh air in this overly-stuffy world of ours. Indeed, his work is so rarified and mentally stimulating that I predict that he will do far more to help people develop towards Buddhahood over the next thousand years than most of the Buddhist sutras combined.

I urge the reader to ignore all the second-hand academic and psychiatric commentaries made about Weininger and simply read his work with an open mind. I also urge you to consider the possibility that most of the negative commentaries on Weininger have been made by the Robert Larkins of this world - that is to say, by low-grade, unstable individuals with axes to grind. That is particularly true of David Abrahamsen - the author of the shoddy but influential work "*The Mind and Death of a Genius*" - who is almost a clone of Larkin.

Moving on, Robert alleges that I provide no evidence for my views on women, as expressed in *The Exposition for the Advanced Mind*, and that is the reason why he did not provide any reasoned arguments in his attack upon this work, other than to call it "gibberish". All I can say is that Robert must have a very large mental block. The evidence for my views on female psychology is everywhere in this world. It is in every pattern of behaviour observed in females - in our mothers, sisters, girlfriends, wives, aunts, grandmothers, and work colleagues. If, in the face of such a massive collection of evidence, he refuses to see it, then there is not a lot I can do about it. I can only ask people to read the work for themselves and make up their own minds.

Robert's latest arguments concerning the issue of self-validation are a waste of time, because it is clear that Robert hasn't made any effort to understand the issue. For example, he wrote:

I have from the start questioned David's ongoing validation of himself in light of the rational necessity that we reject his authority. In his second post David openly took up the issue and insisted that self-validation is legitimate although what he is legitimizing is only the concept that we are in no position to question his pronouncements on enlightenment ...

David is insisting he must validate his own enlightenment. Our problem is as rational thinkers, what do we make of David Quinn? His self-validation does us no good since we are hardly David Quinn validating ourselves.

Because Robert has constantly been trying to "personalize" the debate, he has consistently misinterpreted this issue. It has nothing to do with other people accepting or rejecting my authority. Rather, it is about the need for

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

people to become authorities in their own right - and they can only do that by becoming enlightened and personally establishing their own connection to Ultimate Reality. This is the only way that religion, together with its charlatans, can be defeated. If everyone were to use reason to comprehend Reality for themselves, they would no longer have any need to defer to external authority figures and all the gurus would be out of a job. Cut out all the middlemen, that is my dictum. Cut out all the middlemen and go directly to the Source inside one's own mind.

In my view, Robert's only substantial argument in the entire debate has been his attempt to highlight differences between Nagarjuna's thoughts and my own - and even this argument is extremely flimsy. The foundation of it rests on my declared agreement with Nagarjuna. If I agree with Nagarjuna, states Robert's argument, then why do our philosophies seem to differ?

Note that this is not really an argument against my claim of enlightenment because, as I've mentioned previously, Robert would first have to establish that Nagarjuna is enlightened for the argument to work, which he lacks the means to do. Instead, Robert is simply arguing that I am in disagreement with Nagarjuna, as evidenced by our respective teachings.

The problem with this argument is that, in reality, I am in full agreement with Nagarjuna in nearly everything he says. Our understanding of Reality is absolutely identical. Robert is thus hallucinating when he perceives differences between our views. The hallucinations arise because Robert has no awareness of the Source to which each of us is pointing, and thus he gets tangled up in the words. His mind automatically projects conventional and limited interpretations onto each of our words and thus creates differences where none really exist.

In order to illustrate this point, let's examine some of the verses from Nagarjuna quoted by Robert:

So, when the victorious one abides, he
Is neither said to be existent
Nor said to be nonexistent.
Neither both nor neither are said.

There is not the slightest difference
Between cyclic existence and nirvana.

There is not the slightest difference
Between nirvana and cyclic existence.

For some strange reason, Robert interprets this to mean there is no nirvana at all. This is evidenced by the way he later drew our attention to the following verse ...

The pacification of all objectification
And the pacification of illusion:
No Dharma was taught by the Buddha
At any time, in any place, to any person.

... which he mentions is "very liberating", the last two lines at least. Robert believes that nirvana, if it means anything at all, refers to the elimination of the very concept of nirvana. The concept of nirvana is the product of a mental distinction and that is reason enough to dismiss it. When one has liberated oneself from all dharmas (spiritual teachings), then that is the ultimate attainment. This, according to Robert, is the great liberation that Buddhas throughout the ages have spoken about in such glowing and reverential terms. Freedom from not having to strive for any spiritual wisdom at all. The complete abandonment of the path to enlightenment. The settling down in the vacuous postmodernist viewpoint. This is what Robert believes the Buddhas were on about.

Note that the very first line of the quoted verse reads, "So, when the victorious one abides, ..." This shows that Nagarjuna is already creating the distinction between the "victorious one" and the ordinary person from the outset. This, in turn, means that he recognizes the distinction between enlightenment and ignorance, and between nirvana and samsara. It is the same with the Dhammapada passages quoted at the beginning of this essay; they too create the distinction between nirvana (the other shore) and samsara (the world of ignorance). In fact, you can go to any Buddhist sutra you like, and you will find that they are all based on the distinction between nirvana and samsara, enlightenment and ignorance, the wise man and the fool. These distinctions form the basis of every spiritual teaching in existence, even Nagarjuna's.

So when Nagarjuna says this

There is not the slightest difference
Between cyclic existence and nirvana.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

There is not the slightest difference
Between nirvana and cyclic existence.

... he is, as he already stated, articulating the vision from the perspective of the "victorious one". The person who abandons all delusions and becomes enlightened sees that nirvana is nothing other Nature itself. Nirvana is Nature experienced without the delusions. Whereas ordinary people experience Nature as samsara and get flung around on the emotional roller-coaster ride that goes with it (the wheel of birth, death and rebirth), sages experience Nature as nirvanic bliss.

Moreover, when he leaves ignorance behind and enters into enlightenment, the sage realizes that he has always existed in nirvanic bliss. But because of his past ignorance and delusions, he used to experience it as a kind of hellish, mundane world. His enlightenment has removed this false perception, along with every other false perception, leaving him free to dwell in a timeless Reality which has always been present. This is why it is regularly stated in Buddhist scriptures that the "Buddha attained nothing in his complete, unexcelled enlightenment", and that "nothing is added" by it. He is simply realizing what is already there.

There is a Buddhist story about a lion cub which gets separated from its clan and becomes lost in a forest. A herd of goats finds the cub, and they decide to raise it. The cub grows up believing he is just another goat and learns to do everything that a goat does. He even learns to run away from other lions in fear. But then one day, a kind, elderly lion forces him to look at his own reflection and in that instant he perceives the truth that has always been there - namely, that he is a lion.

This story illustrates how the distinction between enlightenment and ignorance is real, while at the same time affirming the truth that nirvana and samsara are, from the perspective of the enlightened mind, identical. The understanding of this dynamic is completely at odds with Robert's shallow post-modernist take on Buddhism, and the key to understanding my affinity with Nagarjuna.

As if to reinforce the idea that Nagarjuna is nothing more than a postmodernist, Robert quotes yet another verse:

I prostrate to the Perfect Buddha,
The best of teachers, who taught that

Whatever is dependently arisen is
Unceasing, unborn,
Unassimilated, not permanent,
Not coming, not going,
Without distinction, without identity,
And free from conceptual construction.

Once again, Nagarjuna wasn't referring to the inane, postmodernist view that concepts and words are useless. If he really thought that, then he wouldn't have written any words at all. He wasn't a complete idiot, after all. He was referring, rather, to the way in which everything is formless and without any fundamental nature. Things ultimately lack an identity because they are continually changing from one moment to the next and because their boundaries are illusory. You cannot really pin-point what anything is. The moment you try to do so, it is gone. Nothing stays put long enough for the identification process to take place. We can, of course, slot things into categories and pretend that they are static, existing objects. But the moment we lose sight of this, the moment we forget that it is all just a mental process on our parts, we fall victim to an illusion.

The enlightened person is thus someone who no longer projects unnecessary concepts onto things. While he continues to use concepts for everyday purposes, such as "I", "mind", "cloud", "tree", "thinking", "running", "enlightenment", "ignorance", etc, he no longer grapples with things in a metaphysical way. He no longer tries to understand the "true nature" of objects, for example, for he already knows that there is no such thing as true nature, nor indeed objects. The Zen teaching of "putting a halt to the conceptualizing process" needs to be understood in this context. It doesn't mean refraining from thinking altogether, or refraining from utilizing concepts for practical purposes. Rather, it means ceasing to engage in unnecessary philosophizing - or, even more accurately, ceasing to engage in false thoughts. Huang Po, the great Chinese Zen Master, used to remark that nothing could compare to the "sudden elimination of conceptual thought in the certain knowledge that there is nothing at all which has absolute existence, nothing on which to lay hold, nothing on which to rely, nothing in which to abide, nothing subjective or objective".

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Robert also makes the curious statement that, "Nagarjuna, rejecting the self-evident, insists that all things and concepts are empty, including his own", as though this is supposed to prove something. I have no idea what. Obviously, all concepts are empty of inherent existence since, like all things in the Universe, they are causally created things. But the mere fact that they are empty of inherent existence doesn't make them false. A true concept remains a true concept, regardless of whether it lacks inherent existence or not - just as the truth of $1+1=2$ experienced in a dream is still a truth despite the fact that it is a dream-truth. If Robert truly believed that the emptiness of concepts implies that truth cannot be expressed by them, then what are we to make of the hundreds of concepts that he has been spitting out during the course of this debate in the attempt to establish the truth of his point of view?

The perceptive reader will notice a tremendous amount of irony here. Robert is supposed to be arguing that truth cannot be found in words and yet he constantly urges everyone to interpret Nagarjuna's words literally as though they were the gospel truth. In turn, I am supposed to be the person who deludedly thinks that truth can only be found in words, even though I have repeatedly stressed that words are merely vehicles of interpretation and that one needs to look beyond the scriptures for a genuine understanding of Reality. Work that out, if you can. In the end, Robert is essentially a fundamentalist who believes that Nagarjuna's words possess truth and should be relied upon to sustain the conclusion that words cannot possess truth.

In conclusion, I want to examine Robert's overall behaviour throughout this debate, both here on Ponderers Guild and elsewhere, and also the behaviour of Guildenstern and his colleagues. I found their behaviour quite disturbing on a number of levels. Not so much Robert's, because it is obvious that the man is a flake with no inner discipline at all. No, what really disturbed me was the sight of supposedly mature, moderate, "balanced" characters like Guildenstern tacitly giving their approval to Robert's disgraceful behaviour, particularly on the commentary thread. The endless torrent of abuse by Robert (not just towards me, but to anyone who, in Rob-

ert's eyes, was even remotely connected to me), the megalomaniac posturings of self-righteousness, the shrieking howls of insanity that have poured forth from Robert's lips have been accepted almost without comment by the moderators of this board and the senior contributors. They have silently approved it.

If they were true to the rules they have created for their own board, they would have banished Robert days ago, or at least told him to cease the abuse forthwith. But they didn't. Quite the opposite, in fact - when one of his victims finally tried to defend himself by launching an attack on Robert (WolfsonJakk with a very mild attack compared to Robert's endless gutter-mouthed invective), it was he, WolfsonJakk, who was immediately warned by the moderator! Who could have believed it?

This demonstrates the truth that it doesn't matter how despicably a person behaves towards his fellow human beings, he will nearly always get away with it as long as he is preaching politically-correct views and his opponents aren't. In this situation, the end always justifies the means, it would seem. If you're on the side of the moral majority, you are perfectly free to humiliate your opponents in the most shameful manner possible and not a word will be said about it. Everyone will look the other way.

Admittedly, Robert's behaviour was so bad that not even Guildenstern could ignore it indefinitely. However, in my eyes, his condemnation of Robert was little more than tokenism. At first he tried to pretend that it didn't even exist by speculating that he was merely projecting emotionalism onto Robert's frothing-at-the-mouth postings. And then, later on, he invited Robert back, after Robert put on a hissy fit and declared that he was leaving the forum forever, because he (Guildenstern) had "established" that Weininger was sub-human and thus it was perfectly okay for Robert to carry on with his violent, abusive behaviour. I don't know what is going on inside Guildenstern's head, but there's clearly not much concern for objectivity and civility.

There are some interesting parallels to be drawn between Robert's aggressive behaviour, together with Guildenstern's silent approval of it, and the treatment meted out to

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Socrates and Jesus by their respective societies.

Jesus was persecuted and put to death mainly because he had no respect for the religious and social leaders of his time and claimed to have the authority of God. For example, from John 8: 52-59:

"I am not possessed by a demon", said Jesus, "but I honour my Father and you dishonour me. I am not seeking glory for myself, but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.

"You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham?"

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

This exchange bears an eerie resemblance to much of this current "debate". First, there is the claim of authority, then the subsequent demonizing of the individual making the claim by the outraged religious scholars, then the individual's complete and total rejection of tradition, and then the animalistic fury and desire to hurt the individual in any way possible.

Socrates, in turn, was charged with "corrupting the youth" and sentenced to death by the decent, upstanding citizens of Athens. They hated the way that Socrates was causing people to question everything, particularly their values and attachments, and they hated his predilection for showing them just how ignorant and deluded they were. As a result, they wanted to shut down his influence completely. And that meant putting an end to his life.

During the course of this debate, Robert went over to Genius Forum and stated, "If I could I would shut down this board in an instant." (2/6/04, Quantum mechanics and David's Ultimate Reality). He then went on to say:

While individuals so deluded they would promote Otto Weininger as a genius would not threaten most people, there are individuals with whom they shouldn't associate. For instance I do not like the idea that adolescents could visit and see the Three Wise Men holding court. With you remarkably shortsighted and irresponsible people in attendance, those not well equipped for sanity - like some of the individuals already here - could themselves be encouraged to join the delusion.

There are many interesting things that we can observe from this. For example, it is highly probable that the killing of Socrates and Jesus was largely orchestrated by Larkin-type individuals - that is, by low-grade, unstable individuals with axes to grind. They are the ones who tend to become the most outraged by spiritual thinkers and, once inflamed, they are the ones who are obsessive enough to pursue such a destructive course of action all the way through to its conclusion.

However, having said that, it is undoubtedly the case that these Larkin-type individuals had the tacit approval of the mainstream leaders. This relates to the point I made above that Robert has had the approval of Guildenstern and other senior figures of this board to be as abusive as he liked. This should come as no surprise given that mainstream people have their own grievances with the spiritual thinker. Deep down, they thoroughly enjoy the spectacle of Larkin-types hoeing aggressively into him. After all, the dirty work is being done for them. They can turn a blind eye and distance themselves from the whole affair should anything go wrong. Yes, I dare say it is highly likely that the "good" men of Athens gave their silent approval to the hateful campaign against Socrates.

What the "debate" on this thread also suggests is that nothing much has changed over the last two thousand years, despite our much vaunted belief in human progress. People today are still very threatened by the spiritual thinker, and they still have no hesitation in reacting with animalistic fury towards him. Especially when, as in Robert's case, they are

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

already a bit unstable to begin with. The sheer freedom of the spiritual person's mind and his complete indifference to tradition literally freaks the Larkin-types out. It takes them closer to the brink of madness and chaos, and they instinctively come down hard

on it in a forceful act of suppression, which naturally results in hysteria. It is a bit like what happens when you push down very hard on a rubber container; the air that comes rushing out on all sides is the hysteria and invariably manifests as violence and abuse.¹²⁴

THE THINKING MAN’S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

DAVID QUINN'S GENIUS REALMS

"A new blog site devoted to stimulating people's minds with deeper forms of logic and unusual lines of thought. It features possibly my best writings so far."

- David Quinn

This site is devoted to stimulating people's minds with deeper forms of logic and unusual lines of thought. The aim is to take you, the reader, out of your comfort zone by interfering with your habitual ways of viewing the world, allowing you to make new conceptual connections and uncover greater insight into life. Given the depraved state of the world today, I dearly want people to be more rational in their lives and more conscious in everything they do. But above all, I want to awaken them to a great, timeless wisdom that is known by very few.

As for my qualifications, I am a deep thinker with over twenty-five years experience. I do not possess a title or have letters after my name, nor am I affiliated with any organization, religious or otherwise. I am simply a solitary individual who has reasoned earnestly and opened his mind to the truth.

My qualifications are there in the words I write. If what I write is truthful and insightful, if it resonates with you and makes you want to explore wisdom further, then that is surely enough. Letters and titles are superfluous to the path to wisdom. It is the here and now that counts – naked before the world with only your reason to guide you. That is where all truth resides.

I plan to make this site a long-term venture, with regular articles. If you want to keep up with what is going on, you can subscribe via the RSS feed or by email. You can also participate on the site by adding comments and engaging in discussion with others, but please note that you have to be signed in for this to happen.

Special thanks to Matt Gregory for his expertise in the technical side of things. Without his help in making the site both stylish and functional, it would never have got off the ground in the first place. Or at least not for a very long time. He has done a great job, which is very much appreciated.

If you have any queries or concerns about the site, feel free to contact me at ozricweininger@gmail.com.¹²⁵

- David Quinn

"Expanding the Limits of Genius" (May 2012)

Needless to say, people come in all shapes and sizes. Everyone has their own particular traits and abilities. But if there is one enduring trait that human beings share the world

over, it is this: they have an overwhelming instinct to avoid becoming conscious of reality.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

No matter what the culture, no matter what the era, no matter what the race, the same processes invariably take place. Mental blocks are erected, horizons are lowered, childish fantasies are clung to, blatant irrationalities are praised, emotional fears are exaggerated, the comforts of the crowd are revelled in, mind-numbing distractions are seized upon – all of it designed to keep human consciousness to a bare minimum.

People only want to be a little bit conscious, that is the sad truth of it. They want to be conscious enough to be able to acquire the things they need to enjoy life – and that is all. Being too conscious simply gets in the way.

One only has to look at the world-wide prevalence of religion, in all of its various guises, to see this at play. As soon as people lift their attention above the humdrum activities of their daily lives and take in the bigger picture, their minds suddenly seem to go insane. No theology is too bizarre for them, no priest too ridiculously dressed, no minister too absurdly titled, no ritual too banal. The more ludicrous the religion, the more bizarre the belief-system, the more readily it is accepted. It is as though the human mind is utterly incapable of approaching reality in a rational manner.

But religion is not the only culprit here. There are thousands of ways to avoid reality. You can see it in the way academics harmlessly confine their reasoning powers to what is technical and abstract, thereby keeping their logical attention well away from what is personal and real. Or in the way certain kinds of people wholly give themselves over to the scientific world-view, thereby keeping their minds locked within the one-dimensional surface of science. Or in the way many people thrust their whole lives into the animal realms by focusing exclusively on the work ethic and the acquirement of money, status, property and sex. Or in the way some people prefer to live like vegetables and constantly dull their minds with drugs, TV, porn, video games, and so on. Really, the list of ways to avoid reality is endless.

I will be addressing these matters in greater detail in upcoming blogs, but since this site is called *Genius Realms* and this is my first blog here, it is only appropriate that I should open my account with a focus on the subject of

genius – and in particular, the way in which people's conceptions of genius limit their own consciousness.

The word "genius" has gone through many different meanings throughout the course of history and none of them, I have to say, are particularly inspiring. It apparently originated in Roman times in reference to a "guardian spirit". A genius was a kind of spirit being, an intermediary between this world and the next, who looked after your affairs, protected you from misfortune and provided you with wise advice.

On the surface, this sounds like just another comical religious belief and no doubt the Romans, who were as irrational and superstitious as the rest of the human race, did everything they could to make the whole endeavour as insane as possible – and indeed they happily incorporated into the charade the use of omens, ritual sacrifices, oracles, soothsayers and the like. However, it seems there was at least a pretence of trying to associate the idea of genius with wisdom, which is not something we can say about our modern conceptions of genius. In other words, it appears that behind all the superstition the Roman conception of genius made reference, not to extraordinary talent, but to something much larger and more important – namely, to enlightenment, knowledge of human psychology and the art of living. It had a connection to the absolute, at least in principle.

Maybe I am grasping at straws here. After all, the Romans lived in brutal and uncertain times and they were probably desperate for advice and reassurance from wherever they could find it, even from imaginary sources. But at least they were seeking wisdom from their geniuses. They weren't seeking dazzling music or complex theorizing. They were looking for insight into life and death matters. And one can imagine that they occasionally sought it from a genuine source of wisdom – that is to say, from a Socrates-type figure. From an enlightened sage.

In any case, after the collapse of the Roman Empire, things began to change. The connection to the absolute was broken and the meaning of genius went into decline. It became synonymous with extraordinary talent in a

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

particular field. As Andrew Robinson writes in an article in Psychology Today:

The word genius has its roots in Roman antiquity; in Latin, genius described the tutelary (guardian) spirit of a person, place, institution, and so on, which linked these to the forces of fate and the rhythms of time. Among the Romans, the idea of genius had no necessary relationship with ability or exceptional creativity.

Not until the Enlightenment did genius acquire its distinctly different, chief modern meaning: an individual who demonstrates exceptional intellectual or creative powers, whether inborn or acquired (or both). Homer, despite two millennia of veneration as a divinely inspired poet, did not become a 'genius' until the 18th century. This later usage derives from the Latin ingenium (not from genius), meaning 'natural disposition', 'innate ability', or 'talent'.

As we can see, what genius meant in Roman times is very different from how we conceive of it today. Nowadays, the term is reserved for people with freakish skills, regardless of whether or not they possess any wisdom. The most celebrated examples are men like Michelangelo, Rembrandt, da Vinci, Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Newton, Darwin, and Einstein. These men are considered geniuses, not because they had any awareness or understanding of the absolute, but because their talents caused them to stand out from the mediocrity of the human race.

Once you uncouple genius from the absolute, all sorts of absurdities and anomalies arise. For example, if we were to pluck Einstein from the confines of the 20th century human race and place him in a community of beings whose intelligence and scientific abilities were far greater than his own, then what would become of his "genius"? It would miraculously disappear. Instead of being feted as a great thinker, he would be dismissed as a dunce. This alone shows that genius (in the sense we mean today, uncoupled from the absolute) is a relative quality, which effectively turns it into a mirage.

Another amusing anomaly involves the stark contrast between the exceptional skill displayed by the genius within his chosen field and his sheer ineptitude outside of it. Einstein was undeniably talented within the realm of physics, but as soon as he stepped outside the lab or office, his skill and insight into life seemed to vanish. His philosophic

musings, for example, were nearly always uninspired and mediocre. The following quote more or less sums up his philosophic outlook on life:

*The most beautiful and deepest experience a man can have is the sense of the mysterious. It is the underlying principle of religion as well as all serious endeavour in art and science. He who never had this experience seems to me, if not dead, then at least blind. To sense that behind anything that can be experienced there is a something that our mind cannot grasp and whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly and as a feeble reflection, this is religiousness. In this sense I am religious. To me it suffices to wonder at these secrets and to attempt humbly to grasp with my mind a mere image of the lofty structure of all that there is. – Albert Einstein, *The World As I See It* (1949)*

In essence, what Einstein expresses with his philosophic views is a sense of awe at the size and structural complexity of the universe, an awe that is almost girl-like in its naivety. There is no specific knowledge on display, no depth of insight, no awareness of the logical pathways that extend beyond science, no understanding of the fundamental nature of things, not even an inkling that such an understanding is possible. Just a vague sense of astonishment that any happy-go-lucky teenager might experience when puffing on a joint. To put it bluntly, Einstein was a philosophical simpleton. If his expertise in physics went far beyond the greatest of PhD graduates, then his expertise in philosophy and spirituality went no further than the kindergarten.

This leads to another interesting point – namely, that the nature of genius, as exhibited by the likes of Einstein, Darwin, Mozart, Bach, etc, bears an uncanny resemblance to autism. The image of the idiot savant is brought to mind, a mishappen creature who can perform complex mathematical operations inside his head, but can barely cope with saying hello and buying a loaf of bread. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, there were traveling freak shows which featured bizarre people with long necks or no legs, or who were hairy all over, or who could pull trains along with their teeth. People used to flock to these shows and marvel at the strange amusements they housed. In a similar way, the pantheon of celebrated geni-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

uses – the Mozarts and Bachs, the Rembrandts and da Vincis, the Darwins and Einsteins – constitute a sort of freak show for people to oggle at and express their amazement.

And yes, people do express their amazement. One of the more interesting aspects of the modern conception of genius is the way in which it is generally regarded to be a mysterious quality, one that is almost divine or supernatural in origin. When someone exults in the talents of a musician they admire, or a writer, or a scientist, and exclaims, “He really is a genius!”, it is invariably done with a sort of religious zeal. Even atheists are prone to this way of behaving. An atheist might loudly boast that he is beyond all religious belief, but as soon as a celebrated genius like an Einstein or a Feynman walks into the room, watch how he swoons as though in the presence of a god. The desire to bow down and worship is as strong as ever, it would seem, even in our so-called cynical age. “God may be dead, but his shadow lives on”, as Nietzsche once observed.

Yet there is nothing essentially mysterious about genius. It is basically the result of incremental steps deviating away from the norm at an early age. An unhappy childhood, perhaps. Unresolved family issues generating a life-long passion for something better. A genetic predisposition towards logic and introspection. A lack of emotional connection with childhood companions. A thirst for clarity and understanding. A desire to make a mark. A perfectionist streak. These are the building blocks of genius.

And so little by little, as he grows older, the budding genius deviates from the rest of his peers, so much so that by the time he reaches adulthood he is more or less in another world, making conceptual connections and leaps that no one else has made before. Often these connections and leaps are of little consequence and the budding genius remains no more than a peripheral figure. But when the circumstances are ripe, when the budding genius is in the right time and the right place, these connections and leaps can lead to major conceptual breakthroughs.

The mysterious nature of genius is thus an illusion. It is not unlike the way a stage magician is able to dazzle us with his tricks. From our perspective in the audience, the

magician's performances seem mysterious because we are not privy to the incremental steps involved. But once the trick is explained the magic suddenly vanishes, making it seem humdrum, which of course it is.

We like to laugh at the religious fundamentalists who, in their crude misunderstanding of evolutionary theory, often make absurd comments such as, “How can something as complex as the wing of a bird or the human eye be thrown together by chance!” Trapped within the fog of their own wishful thinking, they do not want to see that evolution is all about incremental steps occurring over prodigious amounts of time, and that when changes do occur they are built upon the legacy of past changes. Fundamentalists deserve to be laughed at because they are willfully blind. Yet the moment we regard genius to be a mysterious quality, we immediately fall into the same trap.

This applies to all areas of life, not just to genius. In reality, there is nothing mysterious about anything at all in the Universe. Everything comes into existence through incremental steps, through causes and conditions. We might be ignorant of many of the specific steps and causes behind many of the things that happen in life, but that does not make them mysterious.

Given that the label of “genius” is nowadays applied to freakish, mishappen creatures with little or no wisdom, the question needs to be asked: How much control does a genius actually have over his life? Does a genius really desire to be an ignorant freak? Or is he compelled by forces beyond his control to diminish and humiliate himself in this manner?

Or to put the question more succinctly, are we looking at evil or incompetence?

I always used to wonder at the choices people made in their lives. Given the sheer richness of existence, with its infinite complexities and the endless array of possibilities open to us all, and given that the primary question of why we are alive in the first place is constantly staring us in the face, how is it that an otherwise intelligent person can decide to devote his entire life to, say, studying the mating cycles of dung-beetles? Or the behaviour of amino acids? Or the Latvian underground art movement of the 1920's? Isn't this just the strangest thing? How do

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

people bring themselves to make such a decision? Are they really that blind to the madness of it?

This is bizarre enough for ordinary people, but it is even more strange and puzzling when it comes to geniuses. Mozart, for example, was obviously a very sensitive soul with a brilliant memory and an intuitive, well-structured mind. He had the potential to do anything, at least in theory. He could have opened his mind to the Infinite, grasped the fundamental nature of everything, solved all the great problems of philosophy, spiritually soared to every corner of existence, learned to live joyously and freely, helping everyone to become liberated with great skill and spontaneity – but no. He instead chose to confine himself to stringing pleasing noises together to entertain shallow people with dull minds. How is this possible? Are these really the actions of a genius?

It is commonly said that there is a fine line between genius and madness. And yes, to be sure, if we reduce the meaning of genius so that it applies to autistic-type people who are not really in control of their lives, then there is indeed a fine line between genius and madness. In fact, we can go a step further and say that genius, in this sense, is inseparable from madness. It just happens to be a more productive form of madness. But true genius – and by this I mean genius conceived in the greatest possible manner – is a very different matter. True genius is infinitely removed from madness. If madness represents a deviation away from the normality of human consciousness, then true genius repre-

sents a deviation in the opposite direction. For true genius is nothing other than the full expression of sanity.

Ideally, the Mozarts and Einsteins of this world should be measured, not against the mediocrity of the average human being, but against the highest possible conception of genius. By doing this, it allows us the opportunity to dissolve our mental barriers and become more conscious of what the human mind is capable of. With this in mind, it should be obvious that it is not my intention to belittle the achievements of Mozart and Einstein and their like. That isn't the purpose of this blog. From the point of view of human mediocrity, there is no question their achievements are dazzling. The truth, however, needs to be said. Stacked up against the highest conception of genius, what Mozart and Einstein did with their lives barely registers on the lower end of the scale.

At root, genius is essentially a question of character, not intelligence or ability. It is the determination and will to become truly sane. Genius knows how to open up to the most tremendous thing in life – namely, the reality of the Infinite – and to blossom within it. Genius knows how to go to the very foundation of all experiences, of all perceptions, of all subjective realities, and use this foundation to understand everything that can ever be known. Genius sees into the heart of Nature, it sees into the heart of other people, and, through the workings of cause and effect, it sees into the heart of the past and the heart of the future. Genius is the deepest and clearest form of consciousness possible.¹²⁶

“Believing in Death” (May 2012)

It goes without saying that people generally do not want to die. Most of us want to live for a long time, if not forever. The thought that it all comes to an end can be a difficult thing to contemplate.

Consider what death means for you personally. Utterly everything disappears. Your memories, your hopes, your emotions, your thoughts, your education, your wisdom, your subjectivity, your consciousness, your very identity as a person – all of it vanishes. Your position in society, your business concerns, your relationships with friends and family,

your passions, your loves, your triumphs and attainments – poof! All gone in the blink of an eye. Everything that you love and enjoy in life, all the little things that bring you pleasure, all the delightful moments that you experience in music, art, sport and sex, all the social narratives and soap-opera plots that engage you in daily life – all of it is extinguished. In effect, the whole world vanishes and you along with it. Everything about you disappears forever and ever and ever.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

The thought that Nature will continue to unfold for the rest of eternity and that you will never wake up again.....

The thought that countless civilizations will rise and fall, that countless technologies will come and go, that countless conscious beings, with no knowledge or awareness of the human race, will emerge, flourish and disappear within the swells of countless universes, galaxies and planets, all of it part of a never-ending series of dramatic events, unique situations and fascinating stories that will stretch on forever and you will never get to experience any of it.....

The thought that it could happen at any moment, without warning. A sudden heart-attack. A stroke. A brain aneurysm. A virus. A car accident. A random act of violence. A meteor crashing down on you. Death can strike from anywhere, at any time. People often use the term "death row" when they talk about convicted prisoners who have been sentenced to death. But in truth, we are all on death row and there is nothing we can do about it. How we behave or what we believe or what society thinks of us is immaterial. Nothing can save us.

It is no wonder that human beings do everything they can to paper over this reality with religious fantasy, or try to block it out by keeping busy, by cuddling with each other, by seeking out distractions, by taking drugs. When a child learns for the first time that he will one day die he is truly horrified and he never really gets over it. He might try to suppress it, he might become distracted by the challenges of growing up in this world, but it never leaves him. It becomes a sort of gnawing background horror to his life – constantly pushed away, but ready to erupt at a moment's notice.

The term "mid-life crisis" immediately springs to mind here, yet the human propensity to suppress death, and the grotesque consequences of this, manifests in many other ways as well. One of the more interesting examples is grief. When a person suddenly loses a family member or an intimate friend and falls down howling with grief, he openly displays his life-long suppression of the reality of death. His howls reveal his shock, as though he has been caught completely by surprise; they reveal that he has been asleep, that he has been

stagnating comfortably in a fantasy world which he believed would never end – such has been the strength of his suppression. He might be 40 or 50 years old and highly experienced in business matters and the ways of society, but it is as though he has never lived. He naively thought he could get away with living in a fantasy world indefinitely. And now he howls like a new-born babe at the injustice of it all.

Grief, like love, is rooted in selfishness. And so the howls of a grieving person are invariably steeped in anger and self-righteous indignation. Anger at the loved one for suddenly leaving him, anger at the Universe for allowing it to happen, anger at those around him for still being alive. Consumed with bitterness, the grieving person shamelessly throws around the blackness of his egotism in a very ugly display. Just as bad fruit comes from bad trees, as the old saying goes, the blackness and ugliness of his grief comes from the blackness and ugliness of his love. For love itself can only blossom when reality is suppressed and ignored. The whole cycle of love and grief is a cycle of ignorance, one that depends not only on suppressing death, but suppressing consciousness of the nature of reality as a whole.

If one is forced to choose a single piece of evidence that reveals just how ignorant and out of tune with reality the human race is, then one only has to point the finger at the daily outbreaks of grief worldwide. For it shows that, spiritually speaking, people everywhere are completely wasting their lives. You can forgive children if they fall into grief over the loss of a parent or a sibling, for they are young and do not know any better. But for anyone over the age of 25, it is truly shameful behaviour.

"oncentrate your thoughts for a moment and avoid thinking in terms of good and evil. While you are not thinking of good, and not thinking of evil, just at this very moment, return to what you were before your father and mother were born." - Hui-neng

An objection could be raised that it is impossible for me, or indeed for anyone else, to be absolutely certain that our consciousness ends with our death. While this is true, it is all but irrelevant. Nobody really believes in an afterlife, not when it comes down to it.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Not even the believers believe in it. When a person howls with grief over the loss of a loved one, he is not thinking that the loved one has simply travelled to another place and they will probably meet up again soon. No, his howls tell a completely different story. They tell us that he knows, deep down, that the person has been extinguished forever. The afterlife fantasy might be useful for suppressing the thought of death in normal everyday life, but it quickly evaporates the moment reality intrudes.

Looked at objectively, the odds that our consciousness will continue on after the death of the brain, that there is an afterlife, are exceedingly slim. All the credible evidence points against it. Everything suggests that we fully emerged out of Nature's causal processes and that we will one day fully dissolve back into them. Just as a wave crashes against the shore and wholly disappears, and a cloud dissipates in the sky and wholly disappears, there is no reason to think that our own fate will be any different.

And even if, in the remotest of remote possibilities, some kind of mechanism does exist which enables human consciousness to survive death, it is still going to represent a monumental change. It still means that all of our connections to the world are going to be ripped away from us. So either way, our death is going to constitute the most traumatic event of our lives. The only comparable event, perhaps, is expulsion from the womb, but even here a fetus doesn't spend decades consciously forming an identity within the womb and consciously attaching himself to its various pleasures and comforts within. Those who cling to the hope that an afterlife will soften the reality and trauma of death are seriously deluding themselves.

In response to this, a few of you will probably point to the reality of near-death experiences which sometimes involve powerful altered states of consciousness imbued with great joy and an overwhelming sense of divine love, persuading many who undergo these experiences that there is indeed a loving God waiting for us beyond death. This issue is far too large and complex to go into here, but I will be analyzing these experiences in detail, along with mystical states in general and other similar kinds of neurological phenomena, in a future blog. For now, I will

simply point out that the mere fact these people feel compelled to emphasize the sheer beauty and joy of the near-death experience underlines just how traumatic they consider death to be.

The human race is so mindlessly lost in delusion that it tends to automatically couple spirituality with a belief in an afterlife, without giving it another thought. But if you believe that it is only possible to experience God and enter into heaven after you have physically died, then you will be far too late. You will have missed the boat completely. Heaven can only be experienced here on this earth, while you are still alive, or not at all. Even near-death experiences are experiences that occur within this life. In the end, the desire to believe in an afterlife is the desire to cling to this life. And the desire to cling to this life is the desire to avoid becoming conscious of reality. It is to turn your back on God. As such, believing in an afterlife is really a form of evil.

"The kingdom of God is for none but the thoroughly dead." - Meister Eckhart

Enough! Away with the fantasies! Away with the desperate search for loopholes! It is far better, from a spiritual perspective, to accept the full horror of death at face value and prepare for the worst. In this way, a sense of urgency can permeate your life. A powerful, driving need to become enlightened about the nature of reality NOW, before it is too late, can fill the mind. People tend to work far more productively when they know they have a deadline, for it can focus the mind like nothing else. If there is no deadline, if you believe that you have endless amounts of time to complete a task, then it is unlikely you will ever begin it at all. You will procrastinate and dither so much that you will end up forgetting what the task was to begin with.

*Weak men ever lose themselves on the way.
And at length their weariness asketh: "Wherefore did we set out? All is indifferent!" - Friedrich Nietzsche*

For those of us who strive to become fully conscious of reality, death is actually a blessing in disguise. Not because we want to die and lose our consciousness, but because the

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ever-present prospect of death can steel the wavering mind and urge it forward. Those on the spiritual path often vacillate between their love of life and their spiritual desire to abandon all attachments for the sake of becoming fully conscious. Death teaches us that all of our attachments and loves are going to be ripped away from us, regardless. It is definitely going to happen, one way or the other. You can either abandon your attachments voluntarily (thereby allowing you the opportunity to experience the greatest wisdom of all), or you can be like everyone else and mindlessly wait for the chopping block to fall.

Imagine you are flying in an aeroplane high above a mountainous region and the captain announces over the intercom, "Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen. Do not panic, but the engines are failing and we will be crashing down to earth in a few moments. Please follow the safety procedures." How will you respond, knowing that you only have a few minutes to live? Will you continue to sleep away your time with trivial matters like you normally do? Or will each moment be intensely focused on the most vital of concerns with unbridled urgency? It is amazing just how clear and focused the mind becomes when it is fully aware of life and death. We should be striving for this kind of intensity and clarity all the time, in every moment of our daily lives, and being fully aware of the reality of death can serve as the perfect catalyst for this.

It is not enough to simply understand the truth on an intellectual level. That is a very easy thing to do. All it takes is a single glance at the world to see the impermanency of everything, to see that things are like fragile bubbles which are sustained by equally fragile causal conditions, that each fleeting moment is a whole universe unto itself. Death is occurring all around us at every moment. It is the reality of change. But to truly understand what this means – to fully understand the illusory nature of our existence and to live in the tremendous freedom this understanding provides – we have to bring the whole of our selves, the whole of our minds, the whole of our lives, into the equation.

"It is eternally true that if one knocks, the door will be opened. But suppose that

the difficulty for us human beings is simply that we are afraid to go – and knock." - Soren Kierkegaard

In order to go beyond death, one needs to go through death and beyond. One needs to become like a dead man, without attachment and desire, and only then can the boundless freedom that exists beyond death be fully realized. Indeed, this boundless freedom already exists around us. It is there in the way the wind blows without a care in the world, in the way a wave crashes into the shoreline without any thought of self-preservation, in the way a particle of dust settles indifferently onto a table. And it is there inside us, in the way the neurons fire and our muscles contract, the way the heart beats and the blood courses through our veins, the way the eyes automatically transmit visual data to the brain, the way each thought spontaneously emerges into the mind. All of it is effortless, fearless, and free. This fearlessness is the very stuff of life and death and we are fully part of it.

"The sages ramble in the vacancy of untroubled ease, find their food in the fields of indifference, and stand in the gardens which they had not borrowed." - Chuang Tzu

A dead man has nothing to lose. Possessing nothing, being nothing, he is beyond all possibility of harm. And so too, if a person empties himself of utterly everything while remaining alive, if he becomes the nothingness that he really is, abandoning all desire for personal happiness, discarding everything he has gained from the past and renouncing every hope for the future, no longer seeking anything, no longer storing anything, no longer paying any attention to forms, being wholly unmoved in all circumstances, unmoved even to his own reputation, even to his own consciousness, even to his own life, even to wisdom itself – then death loses all of its power and meaning. It melts back into the charade that it has always been. In the end, death is nothing more than a thief, and not even the greatest of thieves can steal from those who have no possessions to begin with.¹²⁷

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

“Mastering Perspective” (June 2012)

If genius is the art of being fully conscious of reality in the midst of daily life, then an essential step towards perfecting this art is learning how to master perspective.

Most people are the opposite. They are slaves to perspective. They allow themselves to become trapped within a limited range of perspectives, which closes their minds to everything else. Setting up home in these perspectives, they feel compelled to defend them vigorously, even violently. What makes their situation so comical is that the perspectives they cherish are not even theirs to begin with. They did not arrive at them independently through a conscious process of logic that has been thoroughly grounded in ultimate reality. They simply accepted them second-hand from others – from their peers, from their culture, from their tradition.

A person might be born in the deep south of America and thus grow up to be a fervent, bible-bashing Christian, yet if he were born in Pakistan he would be directing the same fervour towards Islam. He did not choose to be born in a region of Christian fundamentalism, anymore than a Pakistani chooses to be born in an Islamic state. Yet they both vigorously promote their respective values and beliefs with a blind fervour, oblivious to the absurdity of their own situation. Each of them have passively allowed their lives to be shaped and determined by the mere roll of a dice. They are but empty clones of one another. The fact that they both hate each other only serves to make the whole thing even more comical.

This madness is everywhere you look. I watched a football match recently between Croatia and Spain and the thing that strikes you about international football is the naked patriotism on display, from both the players and the crowd. You look at the singing, chanting and flag-waving and it is obvious that each set of supporters thinks their nation (their culture, their people, their ego) is the greatest nation of all. They have all bought into this perspective and emotionally invested in it. And yet each of these supporters could have just as easily been cheering on the opposing nation had chance rolled the dice differently. The arbitrary nature of their birth

and the absurdity of their passive acceptance of this either escapes them completely, or else they are too wrapped up in the emotional pleasure contained within their limited perspective to care.

It is not just a matter of where you are born, but when. A lot of college students nowadays naturally believe in the supremacy of science and have absorbed the popular nihilistic belief that truth can never be known, that everything is uncertain. They are quick to sneer at religious people for their belief in irrational superstition. Yet if these same college students were born 1000 years ago, they would have just as naturally believed in the supremacy of the Church and the doctrines of orthodox Christianity, and they would have been sneering at pagans instead. Their mindless acceptance of the dominant cultural myths of the 21st century makes them just as ignorant and irrational as the medieval Christians of old.

When I was in my teens and early twenties, I used to be astonished at how accepting and submissive my peers were. Just the fact that they were so obsessed with women, and therefore obsessed with the business of making money and appearing powerful and cool, was a puzzle to me. I would say to them, “Doesn’t the fact that you submit so easily to your genetic programming bother you? Surely there is more to life than living like a standard, pre-programmed robot!” Most of them would laugh and think I was crazy. But to me, they seemed unimaginative and meek.

It is hard to believe that here we are in the 21st century, with all of the technological sophistication around us, and people everywhere are still happy to play lottery with their lives and allow chance to completely dictate their beliefs, values, perception, knowledge and experiences. It is even harder to believe that most of them are oblivious to this madness. But I suppose I should cut a little slack. After all, the human race has barely emerged from the Middle Ages. Or more to the point, we have barely come down from the trees.

People tend to have very low standards concerning what it means to be intellectually independent. It is not enough to simply reject the beliefs and values of one’s culture and

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

adopt another set of beliefs and values. That is merely trading one perspective for another, which means that your life is still being ruled by the roll of a dice. For example, if the person in the American deep south were to reject fundamentalist Christianity and embrace Islam, or if he were to embrace science and become an agnostic, either way he is still allowing chance to determine his understanding of things and the course of his life. These chance factors might include what his genetic make-up happens to be, what people he happens to meet, what books he happens to read, what experiences he happens to have, what kind of intellectual theories happen to exist in the world, what parts of his brain happen to fire up in any given moment, etc – all of these things play a role in determining what belief-system he happens to find pleasing. Despite making the movement from a traditional mindset to a more individual one, the core madness in his life remains.

If you want to give full expression to your genius and become truly sane, then you must go all the way and completely eliminate the role of chance from your life, and this can only be achieved by pushing the mind beyond all perspective. And to do this, you must learn to become emotionally free of all perspectives.

In some people's eyes, Mother Teresa was a saintly woman who helped the poor. To others, she was a cunning fanatic trapped within a fantasy. From yet another perspective, she was just another Albanian. Or just another human making up the numbers in society. Or just another animal exploiting a niche in the natural world. Or just another biological machine, comprised of fluids, chemicals and electrical impulses. Or just another manifestation of reality, essentially no different from the mountains, trees and clouds. The wrinkling around her eyes, the warmth of her personality, the slight stoop in her posture, the little moles on her skin, the saliva forming in her mouth – these too are all manifestations of reality, essentially no different from the mountains, trees and clouds. The genius is able to entertain all these different perspectives with ease and can flit in and out of them at will. Ordinary people, on the other hand, tend to be emotionally bound to one or two of them and have extreme trouble seeing anything beyond.

The genius is free because he succeeds in leaving behind all finite, limited, relative, human-centered perspectives and uses his mind to embrace Nature as a whole – that is to say, the totality of all there is. The All. He is free because his mind is open to the boundlessness of the “absolute perspective”. Or to put it poetically, he is free because he sees everything through the eyes of God.

The “absolute perspective” is itself a poetic expression. Strictly speaking, it is a contradiction in terms and falls into the same category as the square circle, as a perspective is always relative by nature. In a less literal sense, however, the term refers to the vision and understanding which arises when every shred of relativism is mentally eliminated. Due to the flexible nature of our conceptualizing minds, we have the ability to abstract our attention away from all relative positions, from all perspectives, enabling us to understand the world in an absolute sense. This is a critical skill in being able to perceive the fundamental nature of reality.

To illustrate this, let us consider the size of an object. Mount Fuji, for example, seems enormous from our perspective as human beings, but to the earth as a whole it is a barely noticeable pimple. What size it has depends on your perspective. If you mentally take away all possible perspectives, then Mount Fuji cannot be said to have any size. From the absolute perspective, it is sizeless.

For the same reason, the Universe as a whole (i.e. the Totality, the All) is sizeless. Not in the sense that it is infinitely small, but rather that the quality of size cannot be applied to it. Without the introduction of a relative viewpoint of some kind, size has no meaning. And so ultimately, the Universe is neither infinitely big, nor infinitely small, nor any size in between.

This principle can be applied in countless other ways. For example, not only is the Universe timeless (for the same reasons as above), but it is purposeless as well. A purpose always involves the perception that there is a deficiency in the world which needs to be rectified, and perceptions of deficiency are always relative in nature. From a farmer's point of view, a bacteria-infected tree is a problem that needs to be solved, but to the bacteria themselves it is an occasion to be celebrated. If we take away all the relativism

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

associated with perspective, then we also take away all purpose.

The same reasoning applies to existence itself. The relative nature of perspective effectively reduces everything to the status of a mirage. A mirage is something that only appears to exist from certain perspectives and disappears when viewed from other perspectives. When a dying man in a desert spies a lake in the distance only to find nothing there when he crawls closer, he realizes through a change of perspective that he has been taken in by a mirage. In a similar way, if a person believes that Mount Fuji is really what it appears to him to be – namely, a large, solid, immovable object – then he has also been taken in by a mirage. If he were to adopt another perspective, one that was sufficiently different, he would realize that the mountain was nothing more than a temporary appearance that occurred in the past. From the perspective of a local atom, for example, the solid mountain gives way to a vast realm of empty space with only the occasional appearance of other atoms to interrupt the monotony.

In any case, the point of all these examples is to illustrate how the absolute perspective is not really a perspective as such, but an understanding that comes into being when all relativism is mentally eliminated. Its chief value is the equalization of everything that exists. When you truly see that reality is *utterly everything*, when you see that all things – i.e. all people, all events, all objects, all dimensions, all thoughts, all emotions, all states of mind, all mystical experiences, all gods, etc – are direct manifestations of reality, all of them lacking inherent existence and thus all of them equal in status, then you have reached the absolute perspective. It is the absolute perspective because, having embraced everything and yet rejecting everything, there is nowhere further to go.

Genius is the art of never slipping into existence. It is the capacity to never be taken in by any experience or appearance or perception, not even for a split second. This is where skill in mastering perspective comes into play. If you find yourself becoming emotional for any reason, or if you are burdened with fears and worries, then it means that you are no longer the master. You have been taken in and now you are fighting

against mirages. You have become a slave to perspective.

There is an ethical side to this issue as well. The more you become a slave to perspective, the more you entrench yourself in a particular viewpoint and seek your emotional happiness and security within it, the more you create the conditions for violence and suffering to occur. We can see this in the way that supporting a football team can quickly lead to fan violence, patriotism can quickly lead to war, and love can quickly lead to jealousy and domestic violence.

People often like to say, “We are free to do what we want, as long as we don’t hurt anyone”, yet their lives are filled with emotional attachments which contain the seeds for future violence. They might not throw the fists or pull the trigger directly, but their lives nonetheless promote a grasping mentality which always has destructive consequences. This is yet another reason why people do not want to be too conscious of reality. Their freedom to live as they please relies on them remaining blind to the nature of their actions. In reality, their motto is, “We are free to do what we want as long as we can get away with it, and everyone else can go to hell!”

It might be argued that if people were not slaves to perspective, if they did not devote themselves wholeheartedly to a particular finite cause, then very little in the world would get done. For example, the progress of science would slow up considerably, and possibly grind to a halt, if there weren’t at least some people fully applying themselves to research. While this may be true, it should also be noted that there would be far less violence, insanity and misery in the world as well, for people would be far less defensive about their particular perspectives. As such, the question needs to be asked: Is having flashy mobile phones, sports cars and super-fast internet really worth the overload of violence and madness that comes with them?

I would much rather people begin their adult lives learning to free themselves from all perspectives and tuning into the Infinite *before* deciding how to behave in the world. “Seek first the Kingdom of God”, as Jesus urged. Make every effort to exit the world of conditioning and chance, find the tremendous freedom of nirvana which is your birthright, and *then* come back into the world on your

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

own terms minus any baggage. Then you can decide how best to contribute to society. You might decide to pursue scientific research, or become involved in social reform, or perhaps even write a philosophic blog. But whatever

you decide to do, at least you will be doing it in a conscious, rational manner, and you won't simply be adding to the misery and ignorance that already exists in the world.¹²⁸

"The Race That Chooses Confusion" (July 2012)

Western society is often said to be overly-rational, a claim usually made by women, New Age folk and little children. Western society, they claim, is too logical, too sterile, too left-brained, too methodical, too organized, too bureaucratic, and too joyless. It lacks the dionysian spirit of spontaneous celebration, fluidity, intuitive insight and unbridled emotional expression, as well as the mystical vision of universal interconnectedness. Surprisingly, some even claim that it is too masculine, lacking the feminine energy of the East, or of indigenous cultures.

And yet when I was growing up in Australia I was never encouraged by any of my peers, teachers or elders to lead a fully rational existence. No one ever advised me that I should apply logic to all aspects of my life in an effort to be perfectly truthful. I was never given any insight into how powerful logic can be in overturning my personal illusions, nor was I made aware of its unlimited potential to uncover the deepest truths of life. The subject of logic, if indeed it was raised at all, was nearly always relegated to the academic backwaters of science and mathematics (where it was safely confined). Other than that, no one ever talked about it.

To be sure, Western society is well-organized, methodical, sterile and joyless, which is both its strength and its weakness. It is an efficient system, but leaves little room for spontaneity. Everything seemingly has to be planned to the nth degree. To conclude, however, that this is the result of being too rational is incredibly misguided. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The real culprit is our egotistical desire to be comfortable and in control. Instead of striving to become truly rational and freeing ourselves from all delusion and fear, we Westerners are brainwashed into developing a bureaucratic mindset, which reduces life to a never-ending chore of working, planning, and saving. Indeed, we are so encouraged to

spend our time organizing our lives and planning for the future that we forget how to live.

And so whatever rationality we do possess is employed in a very limited way.

Is it any wonder why alcohol is so popular? And why there is so little desire from the authorities to have it banned, despite it being a dangerous drug that causes all sorts of misery and carnage? Getting drunk is one of the few opportunities Westerners have of cutting loose and experiencing a bit of mayhem. It makes their joyless, sterile lives more bearable. It helps prop up Western civilization. If alcohol (and other similar escape valves) did not exist, then surely no one could possibly accept things the way they are. There would be a revolution in no time.

Because this egotistical desire for comfort and control is so pervasive in society, and because logical reasoning is almost exclusively employed towards this end, people's conceptions of rationality have become falsely associated with the desire for order. When people think of a "rational person", they think of an anally-retentive creature who obsessively builds systems of thought, who minutely categorizes everything, who has emotional problems, who avoids chaos and unpredictability at all costs. In thinking this, they are extrapolating from their own limited conceptions of rationality. Due to their habit of automatically associating rationality with order, they automatically imagine that the desire to become more rational is simply the desire for even more order.

Yet reason is just a tool and can be used in many different ways. Just as a spanner can take apart scaffolding as easily as it can put it together again, so too reason can take apart illusions and systems of thought as easily as it can build them. In the hands of someone who really wants to rid his mind of delusion and tune into his infinite nature, reason can become a very powerful tool indeed. It can clear away all conceptual prisons, letting the

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

cool, fresh winds of Truth to sweep into the mind.

But sadly, human beings tend to lack this kind of desire and courage. They are only willing to use logic to the degree that they feel in control of the process and can put a halt to its workings at any time. They like to seal their rational activities into watertight compartments within the mind, thereby ensuring that their personal lives are never placed under the logical spotlight. Science and academia are institutionalized examples of this.

We can think of each person's life as an enclosed bubble. Inside the bubble, the person lives out his daily life and applies his reasoning powers to the degree that it will maximize his enjoyment of things. But surrounding this bubble are layers of unquestioned assumptions, articles of faith, mental blocks, contradictions, ambiguity, confusion, emotionalism, and vagueness. These layers form a kind of protective shield against reality, which allows the person inside the bubble to live as he pleases without being burdened with a spiritual conscience.

Life becomes a juggling act in which the need to experience pleasure and security (and remain safely embedded within the bubble) is balanced against the need for rationality and knowledge. On the one hand, most people know that a certain degree of logical reasoning is necessary for the practical aspects of life. They know that there could be no buildings or traffic lights or computers without it.

They are aware of its benefits in areas such as science, mathematics, business and law. Even the process of buying a loaf of bread or putting out the garbage requires a certain amount of logic. Without logic life would be impossible.

And yet most people distrust it immensely. They can sense its impersonal nature, its absence of bias, its lack of favouritism, its lack of interest in human values. Let loose, logic is like a devouring alien creature that does not care what people believe or think. Let loose, it can destroy entire world-views in the blink of a syllogistic eye, and deep down most people know it. And so the human race tethers logic, keeps it on a leash, confines it, imprisons it, weakens it, cheats on it, ridicules it. We can observe this dynamic in the way science – which is itself a limited form

of rationality, albeit an effective one – is both embraced and feared by the general public.

Genius is the courage to reason fearlessly in all directions, both inwardly and outwardly. The genius fully integrates what he knows to be true with his personal life. He doesn't compartmentalise. He doesn't seal his reasoning off into tight mental containers.

He treats knowledge and truth seriously. He factors the whole of his life into the equation of truth, and in so doing he makes truth come alive and enjoys insights and understandings that no one else knows about. His life becomes a constant stream of surprise and joy.

It is fascinating to observe how anti-intellectual everyone suddenly becomes whenever their deep personal attachments are in the spotlight. If a person wants to buy a used car, he does not simply go to the nearest dealer and hand over his money for the first car he sees. On the contrary, he takes his time, he shops around, he investigates, he applies his reasoning. He understandably wants to get the best deal he can and does not want to be ripped off. But when it comes to the question of ultimate truth and the future of his soul, everything changes. The careful methodology miraculously vanishes. Reason and investigation are tossed out the window. He is happy to accept the first belief-system that pleases him. In short, he is just another human being. He puts far more thought and consideration into buying a used car than he does for the welfare of his own soul.

Scientists are no different. Although they are generally regarded to be the torchbearers of reason in this day and age, even they habitually short-circuit their lines of reasoning in order to safeguard their personal attachments. A neuroscientist, for example, might be fully aware during office hours that the self is an abstract fiction, that it is a momentary construction generated by neurons firing in the brain, essentially having no more substance than, say, the concept of "Wednesday", yet as soon as he steps outside his office door, it all changes. Everything becomes focused on the enhancement of his own "self" (or just for fun, let's call it "Wednesday").

He goes home to his wife and children in the hope of finding an emotional boost for "Wednesday", he sits after dinner reflecting on how "Wednesday" can best make its mark in the world, perhaps dreaming that

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

"Wednesday" could one day win the Nobel Prize, perhaps resenting that his colleagues, "Tuesday" and "March", are becoming too successful – in short, the moment a scientist steps outside his office door, he leaves his rational knowledge behind and proceeds to go insane.

The neo-Darwinist and self-proclaimed atheist, Richard Dawkins, is another example.

Having worked extensively in evolutionary theory, Dawkins must surely be aware of the causal nature of all organic beings, and by extension the causal nature of all things. He is surely aware that we are mere machines composed of components and processes, yet how far does he extend this knowledge into his personal life? Does he allow himself to become fully aware of the ramifications of our machine-like nature – which, when taken all the way, results in the priceless understanding of the Infinite? Or is he like everyone else, keeping himself inside his own bubble, never really straying from convention, always remaining a family man, always confining his rationality to professional biology and the philosophy of scientific materialism, never allowing it to seek something greater? Given the exceedingly poor job he does of promoting atheism in the community, I already know the answer to that one.

As far as spiritual reasoning is concerned – i.e. treating logic seriously, eliminating all mental delusion and reasoning one's way into reality – there is a global silence. No one ever talks about it. No one ever thinks about it. It is the ultimate taboo subject. If people were a little more conscious, one could almost think there was a world-wide conspiracy going on. But alas, no, it is all played out unconsciously. Just as when a person is caught performing an illegal or depraved act and his first instinct is to bluff his way out of the situation (for his social standing is at stake), so too the average human brain instinctively cuts short lines of reasoning and whips up its favourite fantasies long before any of it ever reaches consciousness.

We can blame academics for this pitiful state of affairs. They have managed, throughout the centuries, to thoroughly mangle the art of reasoning and in the process destroy the status and reputation of reason in the community. What is academia nowadays but a refuge for people with high IQs, mini-

mal courage and overactive imaginations? It is a government-funded safe haven, a kind of child-minding facility, designed to keep their brains occupied while ensuring nothing of importance is ever discovered. A glorified realm of crossword puzzles, if you will. And it is precisely because academia avoids everything personal that its reasonings and systems of thought have become so convoluted as to be unintelligible.

The history of Western philosophy, in particular, is littered with ugly, misshapen thought-structures which stand as beacons to the human avoidance of reality. It was once the most kingly of intellectual activities; nowadays it is a laughing stock all over the world. The professors have systematically butchered it. Even ordinary people can see it.

While academics continue to devour the corpse, popular culture is content to pick apart the remnants. Reason and logic are constantly belittled in the mainstream media. Rational characters in films are invariably depicted as psychopathic individuals who have serious character deficiencies, who are bereft of something "human". Even poor old Spock from *Star Trek* is painted as a fraud whose rationality is a facade propped up by the violent suppression of his emotions. "Could it be that rational thought destroys the soul?", muses Russell Crowe in *The Next Three Days*. I think Oprah and the Dalai Lama might agree.

But human cunning knows no bounds and there are thousands of other ways to fight off the disease of rationality. The use of "paradox" is a popular favourite these days, particularly of college kids and intellectuals.

The blithe assertion that life is ultimately a paradox conveniently nips all reasoning in the bud before it can build up a head of steam. Who would bother reasoning in earnest when the end result (i.e. confusion) is already known? But such a stance is not all doom and gloom, I guess. At least it brings people together and unites the atheists and the religious under a common cause. For in the end they both have the same goal in mind. The religious might call upon "mystery" instead of "paradox", but the intent is still the same. Indeed, calling upon paradox allows the atheist to remain religious without having to be blatantly irrational and subscribe to a belief in God.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Atheists often sneer at Christians for being irrational, which is a bit like watching politicians sneer at the opposition for being dishonest and manipulative. They are obviously not aware of the extent of their own irrationality. The only real difference between atheists and Christians is that they each cut off their reasoning at different points. They both still live inside their respective bubbles. They both still block out reality. They are both equally insane in their own ways.

Paradox is nothing more than a myth perpetuated by irrational people. Whenever a person uncovers a “paradox”, what he is really uncovering is his own contradictory thinking, conflicting values and limited vision. Instead of taking responsibility for the

confusion in his own mind, he passes the buck onto Nature itself. It is Nature which is at fault, not he. And with that filed away, the mind can now rest in peace.

In the end, people just want to be happy at all times and it doesn't really matter to them who or what provides it. Given a choice between remaining in a state of confusion (wherein the dynamics and contrasts can continue to feed their emotions) or ascending into the crystal-clear consciousness of enlightenment which is too pure for emotion to find any foothold, almost everyone will choose the former. Indeed, they subconsciously make this choice in every moment of their lives. It is precisely why the human race is still so deluded.¹²⁹

“Believing in the World” (August 2012)

A new dawn. Looking around with fresh eyes. Catching sight of a box wrapped in colorful paper. Rushing over to it, clapping with joy. Eagerly ripping the paper off and peering inside – and nothing is there.

Disappointment.

Another box is spied with even more beautiful wrapping paper. Elbowing others out of the way in the stampede to reach it. Tearing away the paper in anticipation and hungrily peering inside – and nothing is there.

Confusion. Boredom. Filling in the time with self-loathing.

Another box comes into view, a larger box, covered in glorious gold paper with crimson ribbons tied in a magnificent bow. Trampling

over everyone else, punching them, knifing them, stepping over their corpses, eyes fully focused on the prize. Finally reaching the box and carefully unwrapping the gold paper, heart pumping, breathing faint, hands trembling. A moment's pause and then peering inside with a gulp – and nothing is there.

Cynicism. Falling into drink. Wanting to die.

A flicker of hope as another box, a little box wrapped in plain paper, is glimpsed. Wearily stumbling over at a slow pace. No one around. Clawing at the paper half-heartedly. Peering inside with little expectation – and nothing is there.¹³⁰

“The Dangers of Compassion” (August 2012)

The yearning to be happy is quite possibly the most destructive force in the world. The amount of suffering it causes, the amount of psychotic behaviour it generates, the number of lives it wrecks, is incalculable. As a destructive force it far outweighs Nature's meagre attempts to whip up storms, floods, earthquakes and the like. Millions of lives are being hurt, maimed or destroyed every single day in the name of happiness, yet you will never see a story on this in the news. It is simply taboo in the modern era to expose the truth this deeply.

The yearning for happiness is also the biggest source of human ignorance. It is easy enough for the mind to deceive itself at the best of times, but once the yearning for fulfillment, security and pleasure is thrown into the mix it virtually becomes a *fait accompli*. When a person manages to secure what he thinks is a reliable source of happiness, you can more or less kiss him goodbye. He ceases to be human and becomes a kind of cunning fox, his mind perpetually on the alert for anything that might threaten his prize possession. Always on the defensive, his eyes constantly darting around, he intuitively fills

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

his mind with emotions, justifications, rationalizations, platitudes, snippets of scripture, popular opinions, women's views – anything that can muddy the waters and save him from having to look too closely into the truth of his own situation.

For example, I often encounter philosophically-inclined men who go to great lengths to justify their marriage and being in love with their wife. They are compelled to go to these lengths because, being philosophical types, they respect logic and therefore agree that it is important to give up attachments. But when it comes to their wives, they suddenly whistle a different tune. A common justification put forward, usually in sheepish tones, is that the wife in question is a very intelligent woman who also happens to be deeply spiritual. But many of them are simply content to argue that their love for their wife is “unconditional” and therefore spiritual in nature.

But is their love really unconditional? One can say to these men, “If you were to come home from work one day to find that your wife had run away with another man, would your love for her be as blissful and affirmative as always? Or if you found out that she was slowly poisoning you for the purpose of eventually killing you and inheriting your money, would you continue to adore her as much as ever?” If the man is honest, he will answer that it would be highly doubtful. For deep down he knows and I know that his love for his wife is very much conditional. It is sustained on the strict condition that she continues to love him back – that is to say, that she continues to boost his ego and give him pleasure.

Unconditional love is an entirely different matter. It is a love which goes beyond the emotions and embraces all things without reservation. It is an adoration which wholeheartedly affirms everything that happens in Nature, regardless of what it is. Loving every person that one meets, no matter how they behave. Loving all circumstances as they occur, no matter how gruesome or unpleasant. Loving every aspect of every moment that one experiences, right down to the smallest detail. If you are foolish enough to have a wife, then it means loving everything else in the Universe in the same way that you love your wife. And should she run away with another man, or die an agonizing death, then

that too is loved with as much fervour as ever. Anything less than this and it ceases to be unconditional love. It instead becomes just another instance of ordinary, run-of-the-mill, selfish love. For unconditional love is nothing other than a love for God, a love for the All.

The difference between unconditional love and selfish love is immeasurable. When a person loves unconditionally he expects and receives no rewards at all. He gets absolutely nothing back in return. He loves all things because he clearly sees they are manifestations of his true nature. All things are literally his self, and thus it becomes impossible for him to isolate one particular thing in the Universe (e.g. a beautiful woman) and cherish it more than other things. To him, the woman is no more special than the trees, mountains and clouds. They are all part of the nature of God. Selfish love, by contrast, expects and demands certain benefits, and if the husband does not receive them he becomes angry and begins to fight with his wife.

The compassionate love for the welfare of all humanity falls into the same category. It is fundamentally indistinguishable from ordinary, selfish love. Unconditionally speaking, it makes no difference whether the human race lives or dies, or whether humans are miserable or happy, or whether they are ignorant or wise. None of this matters to God in the slightest. And so the mind of the man who is fully immersed in unconditional love remains tranquil in all circumstances. He has tuned into the All and therefore gone beyond all forms. He sees the joy of God in utterly everything. He knows there is nothing he can do to increase this joy, nor does he have any power to diminish it.

Just as a husband expects certain rewards for loving his wife, so too the compassionate person is motivated by the selfish desire to gain rewards. There is always an underlying egotism to the practice of compassion. Religious people, for example, like to be compassionate because it makes them feel more holy. It makes them look good in the eyes of their God (or so it seems to their eyes) and they believe it accrues them brownie points towards the goal of reaching heaven. What pleases them most is basking in the certainty of a rewarding future.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

In non-religious people, there are other forms of egotism at play. There is the desire to prevent feelings of guilt from arising, for example. Most people subconsciously know that if they refrain from behaving compassionately in a particular situation before them they will come to perceive themselves as being mean-spirited and self-centred. There is also the egotism involved in trying to make the world a better place – that is to say, in laying down the groundwork for the production of future benefits for everyone, including oneself. And then there are some people, usually women, who desperately spend their lives serving others as a way to ward off loneliness and boredom. Without such an outlet available to them, they would have no life at all.

People often invoke the Golden Rule when it comes to compassion: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”. Expressed in this way, compassion becomes an investment in the future. Weak, vulnerable people, in particular, are quick to adopt this rule. They instinctively feel that if they treat others in a caring, non-judgmental way, then others in turn will probably treat them in the same manner. It is a cunning method aimed at disabling the strength and violence of others and wiping away all potential conflict from the world – that is to say, to recreate the womb on earth. Nietzsche was pretty much on the mark when he described Christians as being haters of life.

Stronger, more successful people understandably tend to be not so enthusiastic about the Golden Rule. Nonetheless, many of them donate to charities and become philanthropists, not because they expect charity in return, but to assuage their guilt. Successful people usually gain their success by trampling over people in their eagerness to climb to the top, which can poison their conscience with the nagging thought that they really are despicable narcissists. Indulging in philanthropy is their way of alleviating, not other people’s suffering, but their own.

Compassion, then, essentially boils down to being just another method to boost one’s ego. This is not to say that we shouldn’t be helping others, and I am certainly not arguing for the preservation of the mean-spirited, petty-minded selfishness which consumes most people on this planet, but it is important

to be completely honest about what motivates us in everything that we do. All too often, compassion becomes little more than a drug that people take to make them feel better about themselves. And when people are addicted to drugs they cannot think clearly and they end up causing far more harm than good.

“While we do our good works let us not forget that the real solution lies in a world in which charity will have become unnecessary.”

- Chinua Achebe

If compassion is limited to simply picking up the pieces in the aftermath of human greed and brutality (e.g. feeding the hungry, healing the injured, comforting the distressed, etc), if it refrains from dealing with the root causes of human suffering, then it does nothing to prevent the same sort of suffering from occurring again and again in the future. Compassion, in this sense, is like trying to douse flames with petrol. It might quieten the flames for a moment or two, but watch how they roar back into life with even greater ferocity than before!

The greatest form of compassion is the compassion that seeks to prevent suffering from arising in the first place, as opposed to simply trying to contain it after the horse has bolted. If human beings could be encouraged to tune their minds into the All, abandoning the desire to seek their happiness in particular circumstances or particular forms, learning to get high on life itself without the need for particular things to emotionally and psychologically prop them up, using reason to free themselves from their mental prisons and becoming fully open to the truth, then 99% of human suffering would vanish overnight. In other words, the greatest form of compassion is the practice of reason and the perfecting of one’s understanding of reality, all the while encouraging others to do likewise.

Most people, however, are repulsed by the very thought of this, for it means having to make radical changes to what passes these days for ordinary, everyday life, and very few have the stomach or desire to do that.

For example, love is easily the biggest cause of human suffering worldwide. Anyone can see this. You don’t have to be a genius to see it. It is obvious that the consequences of love are truly terrible, yet people

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

everywhere are more than happy to turn a blind eye. What is the love between a man and a woman but the fertile soil out of which springs heartbreak, jealousy, domestic violence, child abuse, bitterness, revenge, murder, loneliness, low self-esteem and alcoholism? It is a dreadful condition which, although it might generate the occasional moment of bliss, produces endless amounts of misery all over the world.

Yet who among the compassionate are truly serious about abandoning love? Not a single one of them, I wager. This fact alone reveals that their proclaimed desire to eliminate suffering is insincere.

What would be your reaction if you observed a person deliberately setting fire to an occupied house and clapping his hands with joy at the sight of the flames growing larger and ever more fierce, only to start empathizing with the victims as they stagger out of the burning house and actively going over to help them? You would probably consider him to be an utterly deranged nutter who should be locked away for a very long time for the good of public safety. And yet that is exactly how the compassionate appear to me.

Compassion and misery are two sides of the same coin. Just as the joys of harmonic resolution in music depend on the prior existence of dissonant tension, so too the enjoyment of compassion depends on the existence of ignorance, greed, pettiness and violence. Without human insanity to constantly botch things up, there would be no need for compassion, and the delicious joy that people derive from compassionate acts would be denied them.

And yes, the pleasures of love and compassion can be very exquisite indeed. It can bring a tear to the eye to watch people who were once apart coming together – the prodigal son coming home, a Muslim and a Christian embracing each other, a black man and a white man becoming friends, the public appreciation of a woman's skills in a misogynistic society. These dissolving of barriers speak to our own alienation and conflict with the world. It brings to the surface our own yearning to be accepted by others, which is the true source of our tears. The joy found in compassion ultimately derives from our own ignorance of the nature of reality, from the deluded belief in our own self-existence.

One of the greatest dangers of compassion is the effect it can have of turning people's minds against reality. It is a truism that nothing brings two parties closer together more effectively than the presence of a shared enemy. We can see that in the way a nation pulls together during a time of war, or when a community comes together in the aftermath of a natural disaster. In a similar way, the easiest and most efficient way to bring all of humanity together is to make an enemy out of life itself. Everyone can thus huddle together in the face of a threatening larger reality. In this way compassion becomes a form of evil, causing people to turn their backs on God.

When the average person is asked to provide an example of a compassionate person, they invariably point the finger at Mother Teresa. Just as Einstein has become the poster boy of genius, Mother Teresa has nowadays become the poster girl of compassion. And I admit that in some respects the extreme nature of her lifestyle was admirable. Most people put firm limits on their desire to help others. They quickly put the brakes on their compassion as soon as it begins to interfere with their personal lives. But Mother Teresa went out on a limb and turned her entire personal life into an exercise in helping others.

Yet, as with other compassionate people, her motivation for helping others was entirely egotistical in nature. According to the official story, Mother Teresa started off on her life-long path while she was teaching at a convent school in Calcutta, where she became increasingly disturbed by the poverty surrounding her. The sight of all that poverty was making her suffer inwardly, and so at bottom her desire to help others was really a desire to ease the pain inside herself. It was her maternal impulses coming into play, akin to rushing over to comfort a crying child. Although she devoted herself to easing the physical and emotional sufferings of the poverty-stricken in an immediate sense, she never tried to resolve her own suffering through wisdom, nor did she strive to eliminate the root causes of suffering in others. Quite the reverse, in fact, she actively promoted suffering through her desire to get people addicted to religious fantasy, which is like getting people addicted to heroin.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Contrast this to someone like Søren Kierkegaard, who made it his life to suffer for the truth. Although Kierkegaard rarely helped the poor his compassion was immense, completely dwarfing that of Mother Teresa in all respects. The way in which he stared into the truth without flinching and the humility with which he took it upon himself to accept the role of being the conscience of humanity, even though it came at great personal cost, is awe-inspiring. Kierkegaard's work will continue to live on through the ages, terrorizing the dishonest and the deceitful, while inspiring others to form a genuine relationship with truth and open their minds to God. Mother Teresa, on the other hand, will increasingly become a dim memory and her influence, such as it is, will vanish.

Here lies the difference between the genuine compassion of the wise and the ordinary compassion of the egotist. The former seeks to increase suffering in the world (as a spur towards higher things), while the latter tries to eliminate it. Ordinary compassion is entirely worldly in nature and its core aim is to bring people happiness and peace – or spiritually speaking, to put people back to sleep. It is the opposite of true compassion in every respect. “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword”, said the compassionate Jesus.

It is no coincidence that the modern worship of love and compassion has arisen at the same time that society has granted more social and political powers to women. It is a reflection of the growing feminization of Western society over the past century. In the

past the highest virtues were considered to be things like honour, courage, rationality, knowledge, and idealism; nowadays, it is all confined to what is motherly. Indeed, the archetypal compassionate person nowadays bears a close resemblance to the archetypal mother figure – that is, someone who is soft, comforting, nurturing, accepting and non-judgmental.

There is nothing about Mother Teresa that reflects the Infinite. She inspires no one to abandon their delusions and become perfectly wise. While the extreme nature of her lifestyle did harbour some possibilities, it was undermined by her maternal manner and her conventional Christian outlook, and so her life failed to express the rarest and most glorious of all things – namely, the madness of the divine. Unlike her mentor, Jesus, who himself rarely helped the poor and instead spent his life suffering for the truth, she eliminated the dangerous elements from her life and retreated to the safe confines of the mother figure. In effect, she was little more than a super-mum, with all of the limitations that entails.

This is why I am utterly dismayed that Mother Teresa and her like are nowadays regarded by most people to embody the highest of human virtues. The whole thrust of such worship serves to place worldliness front and centre in people's minds, while the spiritual wisdom of a Kierkegaard or a Jesus is being marginalized and pushed out of sight. It distracts people's attention away from what is truly important and thus becomes a powerful force for evil.¹³¹

“The Last Man” (August 2012)

Science has undoubtedly created numerous benefits for the world, but it has also been detrimental in many ways as well. By far its most detrimental effect has been the way it has steadily diminished the depth and scope of human consciousness over the past century. Despite the fact that we nowadays have access to vast amounts of information from all corners of the globe, the human race seems to be becoming dumber and shallower with every passing year.

With global communication tools such as satellite television and the internet, we are in constant contact with all kinds of different cultures, languages, perspectives, and theories, which has undeniably broadened our minds. But just as a piece of rubber becomes narrower when stretched, our consciousness has been thinning out as it has broadened. It is thinning out because people are unable to rationally cope with the torrents of information that are daily bombarding them. They have to resort to shutting down large swathes

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

of their cerebral cortex in order to suppress their sense of confusion.

Since no one is ever encouraged to think powerfully in a logical manner, and since no one is able to take time out from their busy lives to engage in serious thought in the first place, people nowadays have no means of reconciling the conflicting views and beliefs that swirl around them. The only way they know how to deal with the confusion is either by seeking refuge in the simplified, pre-packaged answers of religion, or in the simplified, pre-packaged answers of postmodernism (i.e. truth can never be known; everything is uncertain; everything is subjective; everything is relative, etc). In both cases, the act of thinking is abandoned, the shutters come up, the confusion is pushed aside, and everyone can get on with the important business of mindlessly enjoying life.

The religious side of this shutting down process is already well-known, so I won't bother addressing it in this blog. Religious people, as a whole, tend to be very generic and uninteresting. To spend one's life suppressing reason and thrusting one's mind into childish bed-time fantasies that are clearly designed to make the ego feel more secure would have to be one of the most boring activities imaginable. And when you look at their plastic smiles and forced jolliness, and their wooden conversation composed of religious clichés and scripts, it is obvious that their minds are almost completely dead. So instead I will be using this blog to focus on agnostics – that is to say, on those who seek refuge in the standard bundle of postmodernist clichés (i.e. truth can never be known; everything is uncertain; everything is subjective; everything is relative, etc). Not only are they a growing menace in today's society, but their lives are filled with all sorts of interesting contradictions and amusing ironies that are worth highlighting.

But first we need to make a distinction between agnosticism and atheism. The primary difference between them is that the atheist openly makes claims of certainty, while the agnostic does not. For example, the atheist categorically rules out the possibility that God exists, while the agnostic believes it is impossible to be sure. From the agnostic's point of view, the atheistic rejection of God is nothing more than an act of faith, and thus

the agnostic believes that he is more rational than the atheist. What the agnostic does not see, however, is that his own position is supported by similar acts of faith.

Let us examine the typical agnostic more closely. You will recognize him instantly, for they are everywhere and they are all clones of one another. He is first and foremost a worshipper of science. He subscribes to the view that the scientific method is the only valid means of gaining meaningful knowledge about the world. He even goes so far as to equate rationality with science, such that the two terms become synonymous with one another, and thus he believes it is impossible for anyone to be rational in a meta-scientific manner. If he observes anyone moving beyond science in their search for understanding, he automatically dismisses them as religious fanatics who have entered the realm of blind faith, regardless of how rational and clear-sighted their search might be.

Just as a religious person has his mantras ("God moves in mysterious ways", "Faith surpasses understanding", "He who speaks does not know", etc) and cunningly employs them to dismiss all opposing points of view, the agnostic too has his own mantra – namely, "Everything is uncertain". Whenever he spies a thought beginning to emerge, whether in his own mind or in the words of others, he immediately wields his mantra like a sword and lops it off. Indeed, he comes to do this so regularly and so instinctively that over time the whole process slides imperceptibly into his subconscious and he is no longer aware that he is doing it. In effect, he has performed a philosophical lobotomy on himself and since forgotten that it ever happened.

I remember when I was younger and pushing myself ever more deeply into philosophy, I used to hate the fact that I was uncertain of everything. It is a truly terrible experience not knowing where to ground the mind. Being uncertain of everything is like having a bad acid trip, with everything flopping about topsy-turvy. It is not a realm in which you can rest and take it easy. Quite the reverse, in fact. It is very much a life or death situation, with the prospect of madness only a finger-snap away, compelling the mind to become intensely focused on finding the certainty of absolute truth. The very fact that agnostics do not have a problem with their supposed un-

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

certainty – indeed, they even seem quite smug and comfortable about it – shows that something is seriously amiss.

To put no finer point on it, their proclaimed uncertainty is fake. It rests on all kinds of secret certainties that reside deep within their minds. Even the idea that “everything is uncertain” is subconsciously treated as a certainty.

It is one thing for a person to recognize that he is personally uncertain of everything and to say to the world, “I do not know anything” – for that would constitute an honest appraisal of his own situation. But for him to project this onto everyone else and state emphatically that *no one can ever reach genuine certainty*, or that *it is impossible to know the absolute truth* – well, that is something else altogether. That is his own dishonesty gone mad. In effect, he is claiming that he possesses mystical or supernatural powers and has peered into the minds of everyone who is alive today, as well as everyone who has ever lived in the past, to establish with absolute certainty that indeed no one has ever reached the certainty of absolute truth. Even the most fanatical of fundamentalists wouldn’t dare make such a wild religious claim, yet the agnostic is somehow able to perform this miracle without blinking an eye. And like all religious claims it is contradictory in nature, since it involves being certain (“I know for sure that no one knows anything for sure”) and uncertain (“I myself don’t know anything for sure”) at the same time.

Oh yes indeed, scratch the surface of a sober agnostic and there is always a religious nutter underneath!

Of course, in saying these things I have been a little disingenuous in my treatment of agnosticism. For I have been treating it as though it were a serious philosophic position, one that is worthy of being rationally analyzed, whereas in reality it is nothing more than a crude attempt to destroy philosophy altogether. The agnostic is happy enough to erect an intellectual facade for the sake of appearances, but in reality he is anti-philosophy and anti-truth to the core. Behind it all, what he really wants is peace of mind and the opportunity to live like a contented animal, enjoying the little things in life. That is the root of the matter. He wants to run along with the herd, make some money, have

a social life, marry a woman, produce kids and grow comfortably to a ripe old age. His innermost desire is to merge into the crowd, to not create any waves, to remain invisible and mediocre. As such, the very last thing he wants to do is take logic seriously and form a relationship with truth.

We can think of agnosticism, then, not as an intellectual activity, but as a Borg-like process in which mediocrity consumes everything in its path and begets even more mediocrity.

Given this, you can see why the agnostic wholly commits himself to the scientific world-view and actively promotes the idea that the scientific method is the only valid means of gaining meaningful knowledge about the world. He is fully aware that the scientific method can only ever yield theories that are “provisionally true”, and therefore he knows that all scientific theories are fundamentally uncertain in nature. And so by praising the scientific method to the skies and dismissing everything else, it allows him to mount the argument that it is impossible for anyone, anywhere, to reach absolute certainty in their knowledge.

How does he know that the scientific method is the only valid means of gaining meaningful knowledge about the world? He doesn’t. He just makes it up. Having no interest in truth, he is free to make up what he likes. Again, all he wants to do is promote the uncertainty meme within the community. He wants the world to think that the very idea of absolute truth is a pipe-dream entertained by superstitious people who are anti-science. And why? Because in eliminating every other point of contrast, his own attachment to mediocrity can begin to gain a semblance of respectability.

It only takes a few moments to see through all this. It is very easy to become aware of the logical pathways that extend beyond science into the realm of absolute truth and thus see agnosticism for the nonsense that it is. For example, the view that “scientific theories are always provisional and uncertain” is itself a logical truth that is absolute in nature and can be known with certainty. Since a scientific theory ultimately relies on empirical evidence for its validity (i.e. on what is observed through the senses), and since what is observed through the senses always carries an

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

element of uncertainty, it automatically becomes true by definition that all scientific theories are inherently uncertain. Poof! Straight away, with this piece of reasoning alone, the existence of absolute truth and the human mind's capacity to apprehend it is proven without any shadow of a doubt. With a single stroke of logic, the irrationality of agnosticism is exposed. And yet this simple logical step, which only takes a moment to execute, is one that the agnostic will never take.

Since the agnostic spends his time blocking out deeper forms of logical thought, he is unable to see how foolish he is. For example, in his desire to present philosophy as a form of quackery, he often says things like: "Philosophy is to science what astrology is to astronomy". What the fool does not realize is that if philosophy is a form of quackery, then science itself must also be a form of quackery, since the validity of science can only ever be established by philosophic thought. Turning to the scientific method does not help in this instance. It is meaningless to conduct a scientific experiment to test the validity of science, for that would involve pre-affirming what is being tested. It can only be tested and established by a higher methodology – that is to say, by a philosophic act of logic.

There are countless logical truths beyond science, with many of them able to provide meaningful knowledge about the world. For instance, there is the truth that nothing can exist of its own accord. A car, for example, is necessarily dependent on the parts that comprise it. If you take away its panels, windows, steering wheel, seats, tyres, etc, then you also take away the car. The very existence of the car depends on the existence of its parts being assembled together in the proper manner, and as such the car cannot exist of its own accord. The same principle can be equally applied to all things in the Universe without exception, including electrons, quarks and strings – and of course, ourselves. Anything that exists can be divided into parts, either physically or mentally. Again, this is not a piece of knowledge that can be uncovered by the scientific method. It is a philosophic truth, one that is purely logical in nature, and it is very meaningful to those who are awake to its implications.

Agnosticism is very much the flavour of the modern technological age. There is something about agnosticism and electronic devices which makes them so compatible. It is as though they are made for each other. They are like soulless-mates. A positive feedback loop has thus emerged in modern society, one that involves technological progress and agnosticism mutually reinforcing each other. As people become more and more overwhelmed by the pace of society and its endless technological distractions, they have less and less time to think and thus increasingly fall ever more deeply into the black hole of agnosticism; in turn, the mental vacuum created by agnosticism needs to be filled somehow and so the agnostic naturally gravitates towards information overload and endless distraction, if for no other reason than to ward off boredom. And so it goes on. A continuous cycle that is strengthening and gathering pace, consuming everything in its path. And all the while the intangible path of philosophic reasoning, together with all of its treasures and glories, slips further and further out of sight.

In the past, the masses used to be in awe of the religious temples and cathedrals that stood in their midst. These grand buildings, full of colour and religious imagery, created the impression that religion was a matter of great significance. To the ignorant peasants living in nearby hovels, these buildings seemed as though they belonged in another plane of existence far removed from their daily lives. How could they possibly begin to question the authority of those who build these temples and inhabit them? In a similar way, the technological marvels of modern science – computers, TVs, smart phones, cars, aeroplanes, space shuttles, etc – are seducing the masses like never before. With agnosticism effectively turning people into intellectual peasants, the authority of science in their eyes has become absolute.

The effect this is all having on children as they grow up is devastating. Without knowing what is happening, children absorb by osmosis the agnostic vacuity which is in the air, and so by the time they reach adulthood they are no longer capable of believing in anything. And as their own minds become increasingly more vacuous, they become hopelessly addicted to electronic devices.

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

Indeed, their addiction is so ingrained that they can no longer bear the thought of being alone with themselves. They can barely sit still for a couple of moments before having to desperately reach for their mobile phones in order to send an inane text or watch a moronic video on youtube. They do not live, they flit. From one thing to the next, they flit, never stopping long enough to derive any real pleasure or satisfaction, always on the look out for the next quick hit, always on the look out for something to poke fun at. Laughing at anything and everything is the only thing they know how to do. However, it is not a laughter which comes out of intelligent understanding, but out of a desperate desire to gain a sense of control over their lives. For their lives have long ago fractured into thousands of disparate elements. They have become utterly disconnected from the deeper parts of their minds. They have reached adulthood and now they are spiritually dead. This has been agnosticism's gift to the world.

Just as all closed systems invariably degenerate towards a state of maximum entropy, the world is gradually becoming more bland and homogenous. The signs of this are everywhere. How long will it be before the various nations and cultures of today are replaced by a vast mono-culture in which everyone speaks the same language, holds the same values and engages in the same kinds of shallow activities? It will be maximum entropy right across the board – physically, in the form of science, technology and market-based economics; psychologically, in the form of mindless hedonism and feminization; and intellectually, in the form of agnosticism.

Nietzsche, with his usual prescience, was able to discern this trend way back in the 19th century and wrote about it in the prologue of his seminal work, Thus Spake Zarathustra:

It is time for man to fix his goal. It is time for man to plant the germ of his highest hope.

Still is his soil rich enough for it. But that soil will one day be poor and exhausted, and no lofty tree will any longer be able to grow thereon.

Alas! there comes the time when man will no longer launch the arrow of his longing beyond man — and the string of his bow will have unlearned to whizz!

I tell you: one must still have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star. I tell you: ye have still chaos in you.

Alas! There comes the time when man will no longer give birth to any star. Alas! There comes the time of the most despicable man, who can no longer despise himself.

Lo! I show you THE LAST MAN.

“What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?” — so asks the last man and blinks.

The earth has then become small, and on it there hops the last man who makes everything small. His species is ineradicable like that of the ground-flea; the last man lives longest.

“We have discovered happiness” — say the last men, and blink thereby.

They have left the regions where it is hard to live; for they need warmth. One still loves one's neighbour and rubs against him; for one needs warmth.

Turning ill and being distrustful, they consider sinful: they walk warily. He is a fool who still stumbles over stones or men!

A little poison now and then: that makes pleasant dreams. And much poison at last for a pleasant death.

One still works, for work is a pastime. But one is careful lest the pastime should hurt one.

One no longer becomes poor or rich; both are too burdensome. Who still wants to rule? Who still wants to obey? Both are too burdensome.

No shepherd, and one herd! Every one wants the same; every one is equal: he who has other sentiments goes voluntarily into the madhouse.

“Formerly all the world was insane” — say the subtlest of them, and blink thereby.

They are clever and know all that has happened: so there is no end to their rallery. People still fall out, but are soon reconciled — otherwise it spoils their stomachs.

They have their little pleasures for the day, and their little pleasures for the night, but they have a regard for health.

“We have discovered happiness” — say the last men, and blink thereby.

It has long been one of my goals in life to eliminate religion from the face of the earth. I cannot begin to tell you how much I despise religion, with its insane theologies and banal rituals, its timid reliance on rules and scriptures, its closed-mindedness, its herdiness, its violence. To submit to a religion is truly cowardly behaviour. But even so, I would much rather have the company of a religious person than I would an agnostic. For no matter how insane or fanatical the religious person might be, at least he still has a bit of life in him. He might be a buffoon, but at least he can be an amusing buffoon.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

But with agnostics you get nothing. It is like staring into a void. Aimlessly flitting from one petty thought to the next, passively accepting whatever happens to be fashionable on the day, passively going along with whatever the majority think, filling one's life with emotional relationships and hedonistic pleasures, having no interest in the absolute truth

or philosophic wisdom, living in the moment, waiting to die – can anything be lower than this? In letting himself go like this, the agnostic has committed a very grave crime, perhaps the biggest crime that a man could possibly commit. He has degenerated into a woman.¹³²

“Physicists: The Great Pretenders” (September 2012)

In the past, science was practiced by renaissance-type intellectuals who had a strong interest in philosophy. While the likes of Copernicus, Newton, Darwin and Einstein were no philosophic sages, they at least possessed an awareness of the limitations of science and understood that it had a context within the larger realm of philosophic thought. But this all changed when Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg came onto the scene and instigated the Copenhagen movement for interpreting quantum theory, an interpretation which gained an early foothold in the classrooms and has subsequently become the dominant paradigm ever since. The anti-causal, anti-logical nature of the Copenhagen interpretation succeeded in severing all connection between physics and philosophy.

As a result of this disconnection, physicists have lost their philosophic perspective and become entirely trapped within the scientific mentality, causing them to vastly overrate the philosophic importance of their work. Like air rushing into a vacuum, a collective hysteria has swept through the physics community, leading to numerous cosmologists and quantum physicists deceiving the public with wild, outlandish philosophic claims that are falsely presented as being supported by scientific theory and having the backing of the rest of the scientific community. If they are not staring into the mind of God, they are formulating the Theory of Everything, or unlocking the very fabric of reality, or discovering the God particle. It is as though the vagaries of the Copenhagen movement have given physicists permission to push away and ignore their intellectual conscience, allowing a kind of “anything goes” mentality to take over. Like kids suddenly being let out of school, they have been excitedly running

amok with each trying to be more outlandish than the others.

Lawrence Krauss, a cosmologist and author of popular scientific works, is the latest to be caught up in the hysteria. In 2009, he gave a lecture entitled, *A Universe From Nothing*, which garnered a lot of attention. A youtube clip of the lecture (featured below) went viral at the time and attracted over a million viewings, prompting Krauss to publish a book under the same title. The buzz that was created was largely driven by followers of the New Atheist movement (of which Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris are leading figures) who saw the lecture as a powerful piece of anti-religious polemic, and indeed Krauss has since openly aligned himself with the atheistic movement by teaming up with Richard Dawkins to give talks and participate in debates for the purpose of promoting atheism and science.

The lecture (and book) also caused a stir within academic philosophic circles, partly because Krauss is openly dismissive of philosophy and partly because Krauss's own utilization of philosophic concepts are badly executed. Critics have accused him of being arrogant, anti-intellectual, anti-philosophical, unnecessarily provocative, and even deceptive. I will use this blog to add my voice to this chorus, although I will be coming to it from a different angle than most. My main interest in Krauss is that he is a representative member of the modern physics community and thus an example of what happens to an otherwise intelligent man when he loses his philosophic perspective and falls into hysteria.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with my work, I would like to stress that I have no interest in religion (I support Krauss and Dawkins in their attacks on religious funda-

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

mentalism), nor in academic philosophy (I agree with Krauss that academic philosophy, for the most part, is a waste of time). My interest lies in what can loosely be described as “spiritual philosophy”, which is neither religious nor academic in nature, and involves worshipping rationality in all aspects of existence, including every nook and cranny of one’s personal life. Thus, in writing this blog, I am representing those rare thinkers of the past – such as Socrates, Diogenes, Buddha, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Nagarjuna, Huang Po, Hakuin, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche – who took reason seriously and applied it relentlessly to expose and reject everything that was false in their lives, both personally and professionally. In other words, the true atheists. [...]

The first thing that strikes you when watching this video is that the title, *A Universe From Nothing*, conflicts with the actual content of the lecture and is misleading on a number of fronts. In particular, it is clear that the words “Universe” and “Nothing” are not being used in the conventional manner. The “Universe” is commonly defined to be the totality of everything that exists or can exist, but in physics, and therefore with Krauss, the word has adopted a considerably lesser meaning. What he calls the “Universe” is simply the observable cosmos, the small expanding space-time bubble in which we live, one of possibly countless other space-time bubbles within a larger reality called the “Multiverse”. In other words, the “Universe” in physics has come to mean a mere portion of the Totality, and not the Totality itself.

The word “nothing”, in turn, is also given a strange, unconventional meaning (19:40 in the video). For most people, “nothing” in the purest sense of the word means *nothing whatsoever*. It means the complete and utter absence of all existences, forms, properties, states, laws, potentialities, etc. It is the complete antithesis of “something” in every respect. But this evidently does not suit Krauss, for he decides to redefine the word to mean something else entirely – namely, a quantum vacuum which consists of a “boiling, bubbling brew of virtual particles popping in and out of existence at a time-scale so short you can’t see them” (20:19). In essence, he constructs a facade of nothing which he presents

to the public, only to sneakily slip a form of “something” in through the back door.

Krauss attempts to justify this bizarre use of the word “nothing” by arguing that modern cutting-edge physics has changed our view of what nothingness is, that the old idea of it being nothing whatsoever has to be abandoned. But that is clearly rubbish. The concept of “nothing” is like the mathematical concept of “zero” in that you cannot modify or tweak it without utterly destroying it. As soon as you try to tweak “nothing”, however slightly, it automatically ceases to be nothing and instantly slides into the other camp, into the realm of “something”.

If Krauss was to go around telling mathematicians that the latest cutting-edge physics shows that zero no longer equals zero, but instead equals, say, 0.0043, he would be quickly laughed out of his profession. His reputation as a credible thinker would vanish. And yet that is exactly what he is attempting to do with the concept of nothing. He isolates a particular subset of “something” (i.e. the quantum vacuum) and arbitrarily defines it to be nothing. He only gets away with it because the people he generally hangs around with are scientists who also don’t give a toss about anything other than science. It is all part of the “anything goes” mentality which currently afflicts the physics community.

Just the idea of altering definitions for ostensibly “scientific reasons” should be regarded with a great deal of skepticism. Imagine if a group of leading biologists with a militant social agenda were to start advocating that the definition of a “human being” should be changed to exclude blonde, blue-eyed Germans on account that they were missing a particular gene that the rest of the human race possessed. What would be your response? Wouldn’t you instantly smell a rat? I don’t see how Krauss’s attempt to redefine nothing is any different. There is a hidden agenda at play and it is not scientific. The agenda, at root, is to make cosmology seem more philosophically significant than it is.

Given that the “Universe” does not really mean the Totality, and “Nothing” does not really mean nothing, then by rights Krauss’s book should really be called, “Our local environment within the larger body of reality comes from something else.” Or if it needs to be more catchy: “Nothing New Here, Busi-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ness as Usual". It might not attract as much attention, but at least it would be honest. Curiously, Krauss seems half-aware that it is all a sham. In another video on youtube which features Krauss and Dawkins conversing at the Australian National University, he admits that when he puts his "educator's hat" on and gives lectures about modern cosmology he does not mind being provocative with his language (1:28:20). His aim, he says, is to seduce people into taking an interest in science and if that means using misleading philosophic language to mess with their heads, then so be it. In other words, he admits that he deliberately participates in a confidence trick. It is the first time I have ever seen a physicist being so open about it, so I will grudgingly give him some credit for that.

This raises the question of whether Krauss is not only seducing and deceiving the general public, but also his scientific colleagues as well. Richard Dawkins, for example, seems to have become positively awestruck by the idea that something can come from nothing, and he even endorses Krauss's book, *A Universe From Nothing*, in a glowing afterword:

*Do the laws and constants of physics look like a finely tuned put-up job, designed to bring us into existence? Do you think some agent must have caused everything to start? Read Victor Stenger if you can't see what's wrong with arguments like that. Read Steven Weinberg, Peter Atkins, Martin Rees, Stephen Hawking. And now we can read Lawrence Krauss for what looks to me like the knockout blow. Even the last remaining trump card of the theologian, "Why is there something rather than nothing?" shrivels up before your eyes as you read these pages. If *On the Origin of Species* was biology's deadliest blow to supernaturalism, we may come to see *A Universe from Nothing* as the equivalent from cosmology. The title means exactly what it says. And what it says is devastating.*

Yet things are rarely straightforward in real life. Dawkins appeared on Australian television earlier this year and there he was rather less confident about the matter:

At 27:35, Dawkins states, "Lawrence Krauss calls the substrate of his explanations 'nothing'. It is possible to dispute whether 'nothing' is quite the right word, but whatever it is, it is going to be very, very simple and

therefore is a worthy premise for an explanation – whereas a god, a creative intelligence, is not a worthy substrate for an explanation because it is already very complicated". So here we see Dawkins backing away from his original stance that the title *A Universe From Nothing* means exactly what it says. He now seems to be hedging his bets. The Nothing is now possibly a Something. A very simple Something perhaps, but still a Something. In prevaricating like this, Dawkins is effectively conceding that modern cosmology is as far away from resolving the origins of Nature as ever (from now on I will be using the word "Nature" to mean the totality of all there is). Thus, far from being the "knock-out blow" against theology, Dawkins unwittingly affirms that Krauss's punch is limited and weak, and far from being dead and buried, theology is allowed to climb back up from the deck once more.

Atheists are quick to pounce on religious people for postulating "God" as the ultimate explanation for the existence of Nature. As they correctly point out, such a postulation does not achieve anything as this new thing called "God" is itself in need of explanation. The goal posts have merely been shifted from a thing called the "Universe" to a thing called "God", with nothing being resolved in the process. Or to put it more succinctly, any postulated God would necessarily be a part of Nature (again, defined as the totality of all there is). In a similar way, if Krauss wants to push the idea that the quantum vacuum is the ultimate explanation of Nature, then the existence of the quantum vacuum itself will need explaining. Trying to airbrush this quantum vacuum into nothingness is a cute way to try and remove the need for an explanation, but I doubt that it will convince anyone in the long run.

Perhaps he is getting old, but Dawkins is somehow failing to see that as far as the ultimate explanation of Nature is concerned, it does not matter if the quantum vacuum turns out to be simple or not. That is entirely irrelevant. It will still be a form of something and thus will still be in need of explanation. In fact, this goes to the heart of why science will never be able to uncover the ultimate explanation of Nature. For as soon as you assert "something" to be the ultimate explanation of Nature, no matter what this "some-

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

thing” is or how simple it might be, it automatically disqualifies itself on the grounds that it too is a part of Nature.

From a purely logical standpoint, there are only two possibilities concerning the origins of Nature. It either stretches back forever into the beginningless past, or it popped into being out of nothing whatsoever at some point. In other words, it either had an absolute beginning or no beginning at all. And science utterly lacks the capacity to deal with either possibility.

If Nature stretches back forever, then no one, not even a great physicist, can isolate a first cause. For there would be no first cause. In such a context, science will always remain a limited phenomenon, a collection of concepts and equations that might be efficient at mapping a small portion of Nature, but which can only look on wistfully as the rest of Nature spreads endlessly beyond its sights. Physics would no longer be the puffed-up aristocratic scientific discipline that probes at the very fundamentals of reality, but rather a local science concerned with the immediate environment and not much else. It would be a mere blip in an endless sea of reality.

On the other hand, if Nature had an absolute beginning, then no one, not even a great physicist, will be able to formulate an explanation. Contrary to what some people say, science cannot deal with a state of pure nothingness in which all causes are entirely absent. The very premise of science, its *raison d'être*, is the investigation of causes. If thousands of years ago the human race had simply decided to believe that everything they experienced just popped into existence out of nothing whatsoever, then science would never have got off the ground in the first place. No amount of scientific theorizing, no matter how mathematically sophisticated, can deal with a reality that has things popping into existence out of nowhere without rhyme or reason.

Not even the probabilistic theories of quantum mechanics can deal with pure nothingness. Quantum theory can only work as a predictive tool because there are regularities in the quantum realm for it to measure, and regularities can only exist because the quantum vacuum is not pure nothingness, but a realm in which causal forces (in whatever form) are at play. The Copenhagen interpreta-

tion of quantum mechanics asserts that there are no such forces, but if that was really the case then we would not be seeing the same handful of particles constantly arising (electrons, protons, quarks, etc), complete with the same recognizable qualities of mass and spin and so on, and we would not be seeing these particles constantly appearing in the expected areas in line with the probability distribution curves. Instead, there would be an infinite array of unique forms appearing all over the place, with little or no repetition at all. The very attempt to create probability distribution curves under such a scenario would be useless. It would be like trying to model white noise.

So if it really was the case that Nature just popped into existence out of nothing whatsoever, without rhyme or reason, then no scientific explanation of any kind can be formulated. “It just happened” would be the considered verdict and that would be the end of the matter. In the lecture above, Krauss tries to get around this dilemma by saying that the nothingness he talks about is unstable. “Why is there something rather nothing?”, he asks (40:34), before answering: “There had to be. If you have nothing in quantum mechanics, you will always get something”. Or to paraphrase: “I dunno, it just happens.”

This fact alone, that science cannot deal with Nature either having a beginning or not having a beginning, demonstrates that science is incapable of providing the ultimate explanation of things. The greatest minds of each generation could conceivably spend the next ten million years single-mindedly building larger telescopes, inventing more finely-tuned observational devices, developing ever more sophisticated conceptual models, making breakthrough after breakthrough in cosmology and quantum mechanics, constantly pushing back the boundaries of what can be observed in Nature – and even then, after all that time, they still will not have advanced a single inch towards reaching an ultimate understanding of things. Why? Because it is the wrong tool for the job. Science can no more provide an ultimate explanation of things than reading the Bible can provide meaningful scientific theories.

You only have to look at the way scientists today can find support for a wild variety of philosophical and religious beliefs from

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

current cosmological theories. Cosmologists can look at the same scientific data and see Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, atheism, theism, agnosticism, and even pagan gods staring out of its patterns. In effect, modern cosmology, along with quantum physics, has become a glorified Rorschach ink blot onto which people can project any kind of religious or philosophic belief they want. As a constructed realm of ambiguity, perhaps only the Bible can rival it. Indeed, modern physics has in many respects become the new Bible, and Krauss and Dawkins are just another couple of scientists who, armed with their own personal baggage, biases and gripes, have dipped into it and "seen" their own non-scientific belief in atheism reflecting back at them.

As far as philosophy is concerned, science will always remain nothing more than a glorified Rorschach ink blot. Unless it radically changes its nature and abandons the scientific method, this will always be the case. It is one of the inherent limitations of science. This is why I am always puzzled and amused whenever I hear physicists talking about their search for the Theory of Everything. Of course, with scientists and their god-given habit of redefining common words, the "Everything" they talk about does not really mean everything, and their search for the Theory of Everything usually refers to the more technical goal of uncovering a consistent set of laws or equations that can describe all of the processes that physicists observe in the universe. But there are still some physicists who have grander aims and continue to hope that cosmology will one day uncover the ultimate explanation of things. What they do not realize, however, is that in order to find the ultimate explanation of things one has to leave science behind and enter the realm of pure logic.

The human race already knows the Theory of Everything and has known about it for thousands of years. It is there staring at us in the face in every single moment of our lives, but like all great truths it can sometimes be too obvious and too simple for people to see. The great Theory of Everything, the kernel truth that explains the existence of all things, the core process which creates everything that you are and everything that you experience, is none other than: cause and effect.

To get a handle on what I mean by cause and effect, think of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection, but tweak it so that it becomes simpler, broader and more wide-ranging, such that it embraces not only all forms of life, but all forms of non-life as well. Whether it be billiard balls crashing into each other, or the plasma movements inside stars, or the neurons firing inside the brain to create conscious thought, or the fluctuations occurring within the quantum vacuum, cause and effect is always in operation. It is the key process behind all processes. Blind, aimless, relentless, it never sleeps.

Everything is explained with this simple principle alone. Indeed, it is the simplest and most elegant explanation imaginable. And what's more, no other explanation is possible. Any attempt to create an alternative explanation will always assume cause and effect and make use of it. Whether it be a religious person positing a God or a divine force to explain the Universe, or a physicist positing a quantum vacuum or a set of laws, cause and effect will always be at the heart of it. All other explanations are essentially cause and effect fleshed out into more complicated forms. If you were to boil them back down to their essence, then only cause and effect would remain. Cause and effect is always the core explanation (the trunk), while religious beliefs and scientific theories are the decorative, incomplete descriptions of certain kinds of causal processes that are observed in the world (the branches).

Of course, it is the fashion these days to think of cause and effect as an out-dated concept. And what is an intellectual but a slave to fashion? Many people seem to think that David Hume cast doubt on cause and effect back in the 18th century, while quantum mechanics more recently hammered the final blow. But they are wrong on both counts. David Hume did argue, correctly, that we can never be sure about what actually causes what in the observable universe. We might throw a glass against the wall and watch it smash into pieces, and we might naturally conclude that the glass hitting the wall was the cause of it being smashed, but we can never be 100% sure that the two events are that tightly linked. For all we know, the glass might have been smashed by a ray gun operated by aliens from outer

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

space. But in pointing this out, Hume is not really undermining the concept of cause and effect as such, not as a logical principle at least. He is not saying that things come from nothing. He affirms that they do come from somewhere. We just cannot be sure exactly where.

In other words, Hume's argument is directed towards the inherent limitations of empirical observation and affirms the obvious truth that the scientific method can never uncover any knowledge that possesses absolute certainty. It does not address the deeper, more logical conception of causality. The logical proof of causality ultimately stems from recognizing that nothing can exist of its own accord, independently of other things. Unfortunately, there is not enough space in this blog to go into this matter properly, but for those who are interested I have outlined the logical nature of cause and effect in some detail in a book called Wisdom of the Infinite.

As for quantum mechanics, I dealt with this earlier. The truth is, no one really understands quantum theory and what its implications are. Even its leading researchers admit they do not really understand it. "I think I can safely say that nobody understands quantum mechanics", said the great physicist, Richard Feynman. It is a glorified Rorschach ink blot in and of itself. Whatever philosophic conclusions you extract from it depends on what assumptions you plug into it. The Copenhagenists plug in the assumption that quantum mechanics is a complete theory and lo and behold, uncausality pops out as a result. The many-worldists assume that the universal wave function is objectively real and does not collapse upon observation and lo and behold, causality pops out again. Clearly, as a philosophic device for discerning truth, quantum theory is useless. And besides, regardless of whatever assumptions physicists care to plug into the system, the fact still remains that quantum mechanics is a remarkably accurate predictive tool – indeed, it possesses an accuracy that is "equivalent to predicting the distance between New York and Los Angeles to within one hairsbreadth", to quote Feynman again – which automatically implies that the quantum realm is a highly regulated one. The quantum realm is clearly deterministic in the sense that it is composed

of causal forces, even though it may be indeterministic in the sense that the old models of classical physics cannot follow what is going on down there.

It might be objected that cause and effect is a useless explanation since it cannot be used to make predictions or be falsified by the scientific method. While that is true, it does not automatically make it useless. Cause and effect is a philosophic explanation, not a scientific one. If you want to make predictions, then you have to devise and utilize the appropriate scientific theories. If you want to find the core philosophic explanation of why anything exists at all, then you need to leave science behind and philosophically reason your way to cause and effect. That is the choice you have. It is either one or the other. You cannot have a theory that does both. While the philosophic truth of cause and effect is indeed limited in that it cannot be used to make specific predictions about the future, scientific theorizing is equally limited in that it can never provide the ultimate explanation of things. They both represent two different fields of expertise, with each focused on two different forms of knowledge. And they are both perfectly compatible with one another. To affirm the one does not require us to negate the other. Both Dawkins and Krauss make the mistake of assuming that absolute certainty of any kind is a threat to the open-endedness of scientific theorizing. But then, they are so ignorant about non-scientific matters and so spooked by religious people that they have lost the ability to distinguish between religion and philosophy.

To repeat, if you want predictions, do science. If you want explanation, do philosophy. If you want to avoid both, do religion.

In my experience, religious people are just as repelled by the principle of cause and effect as scientists are. They do not see any value in it either. It is too cold and impersonal for them. It does not promise any security in this life, nor any kind of heaven in the next. Just as cause and effect is not a scientific explanation, it is not a religious one either. However, truth is truth and should never be ignored just because you do not like it. Regardless of what scientists and religious people want to believe, cause and effect remains the only ultimate explanation there can ever be.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

I found it interesting that in the first video above, *A Universe From Nothing*, Krauss talks candidly about “the most poetic thing he knows” about the Universe (16:25-17:25), which is that the atoms in our bodies come from dead stars, and that the atoms in our right hand could well have come from different stars to the atoms in our left hand. What is interesting to me is that Krauss here comes close to an awareness of cause and effect in a deeper, more existential sense and it seems to affect him profoundly, so much so that it was probably one of the contributing factors that led him to take up cosmology in the first place. But instead of becoming more directly conscious of cause and effect via philosophic reasoning, he took a tangential path away from this insight and became a scientist instead. And now he tries to rekindle that feeling through the indirect means of physics and mathematics, which allows him to gain the occasional glimpse of causality from a safe distance.

I mentioned earlier that modern cosmology, and indeed science in general, is like a Rorschach ink blot onto which people can project any religious or philosophical theory they like. We can think of the entire realm of science as a loose collection (or splotches) of complicated formulations of cause and effect, with plenty of gaps in between these various splotches, as well as a large gap between the splotches as a whole and the root principle of cause and effect. It is by exploiting these gaps that people can insert their religion. They can project a belief in God into these gaps if they want, or they can project atheism. And this is only made possible because people everywhere, including scientists and academics from all over the world, have intellectually and existentially removed themselves from the principle of cause and effect as far as humanly possible. They created the gaps to begin with and now they instinctively do everything they can to maintain them.

This is why the likes of Krauss and Dawkins appear insane in my eyes, and why their atheistic crusade is little more than a futile parody that actually encourages the growth of religion, rather than the opposite. By constantly affirming that science is the only valid means of gaining meaningful knowledge about the world, they are in effect affirming that all we ever have access to are Rorschach

ink blots – which in turn preserves the gaps for religious people to exploit. So in the guise of trying to eliminate religion, they are actually helping to support it. If they were not so firmly entrenched in their scientific mindset, they would easily perceive this. But as with most scientists these days, they have lost their philosophic perspective and hence they are unable to see anything of any real note.

On the other hand, perhaps they do sense their own irrationality on some level. There is, after all, an element of violence to the way Krauss and Dawkins conduct themselves in their battle to counter religion, and there is a violence to the way they grasp tightly to their Rorschach ink blots. It brings to mind the image of the homophobic male who is quick to lash out at gay people as a way to distance himself from the nagging thought that he himself might be gay. Perhaps they do need religious people around, after all, in order to maintain their own belief that they are rational human beings. It is very easy to appear rational if all you do is constantly compare yourself to the Mormons, the Creation Scientists and their like.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, despite outward appearances, Krauss and Dawkins harbour no real desire to eliminate religion from the world. For that would mean having to face up to their own irrationality. If they were truly rational and genuinely serious about gaining knowledge of the world, then they would not be closing their minds to philosophy and the realm of logical truth. The fact that they seem to have no awareness at all that such a source of knowledge exists, not even the slightest inkling of it, shows that their minds are ultimately just as rigid and close-minded as the religious people they attack.

If the human race were to fully embrace cause and effect, both intellectually as the core explanation of everything, and existentially as the “stuff” out of which every aspect of their personal lives is composed, religion would quickly become a thing of the past. It is only by embracing cause and effect that one can truly go beyond all religion. It is the most atheistic of all activities and also the most spiritual. For spirituality is nothing other than atheism pushed to the extreme.

Incidentally...

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

The question, “Why is there something rather than nothing?” is wrongly framed because it falsely assumes there is something to begin with. While Nature is obviously not nothing whatsoever (on account that we appear to exist and have experiences), it does not automatically mean that Nature is a something. Both categories are inaccurate in this case. Only things within Nature are capable

of existing and not-existing, whereas Nature itself (the totality of all there is) is capable of neither. To put it crudely, Nature does not have the ability to coalesce into a form of some kind. For if it ever did, it would immediately cease to be Nature as a whole and instead just be another thing within Nature.

Nature is “unborn, and therefore ever-living”, as the sagely Lao Tzu once said.¹³³

“Crossing the Road” (September 2012)

“After so much suffering in Nirvanic castles
What a joy to sink into this world!
People wear silk clothes,
Buddhas dress in rags.
A wooden man walking in the evening,
A stone woman with a bonnet –
For the first time you will see
When you can cup your hands
And pick up the moon as it floats
On the still surface of a pond.”

A few years ago I wrote a book called The Wisdom of the Infinite which detailed some of the logic involved in reaching a perfect intellectual understanding of reality. Reaching such an understanding, however, is really just the first step of the spiritual path. It is the easy part. The real business of spirituality involves applying this understanding to your daily life – indeed, applying it wholeheartedly to such an extent that it utterly consumes your existence.

This is the stage where philosophy transforms into spirituality and all subsequent progress is driven by desire, courage and character. It is the stage where terms like “faith” and “gnashing of teeth” begin to have real meaning. It can be a lonely and frightening road, but also one filled with wondrous sights. It is like being dropped into a hostile world which has no interest in truth and one has to fight demons on all fronts – both outwardly in the form of other people and their sheer loathing towards anything that forces them to become more conscious, and inwardly in the form of one’s own hesitations and weaknesses. And then, every now and then, one slips into heaven.

Many people who seek the truth are motivated by the wrong reasons. Their desire for truth is borne out of a disgust of mainstream life and a hatred of the lies and falsehoods

which permeate society. Their disgust is essentially a desire to escape. This is fine as far as it goes, as it can take you some way towards the goal, but if it is not sublimated and eventually replaced by a child-like love of truth for its own sake, then there will come a point where you will stop and go no further. For as your intellectual understanding develops and creates distance between yourself and the world, the driving force of disgust will peter out and all you will be left with is a hollow conceptual understanding of things and an impoverished daily existence. The disgust needs to be transformed into love, for only then will you be motivated to push on when the going gets tough. Only then will truth come to life and reveal its countless treasures.

Don’t be fooled by lesser attainments. Set only the highest standards for yourself. Aim for the stars. If you are not experiencing the full nature of the Infinite in every moment – concretely, directly and consciously, in every situation you find yourself in – then you do not really know it at all. That is how you should always be viewing the matter. The whole of God’s nature can be found in a crumpled leaf or a speck of dust if you know how to look. The key lies in having the courage to look.

If you truly desire the truth, then it helps to burn your bridges to the world. If you can extinguish all other avenues of fulfilment, if you can place all of your eggs in the one basket of truth, it will force you to make the truth the centre of your life whether you like it or not. Spiritual success is a product of total commitment. If you can take the plunge and reject the world completely then not only will you quickly find nirvana, but it will save you a lot of unnecessary suffering as well. Kevin

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Solway makes the analogy of crossing a busy street to get to the other side (where nirvana resides). If you hesitantly venture out a little way and then stop, you will quickly be battered into submission. But if you can stride out with clarity and purpose, you will reach the other side in no time. Then you can take your ease.

Of course, things are rarely this black and white. We are human, after all, and each of us has our own fears and weaknesses. While stepping out onto the road is relatively easy, as one is still feeling empowered by one's intellectual understanding and everything still looks fresh and new, it is making the decision to go further out into the road, away from the world, away from the human race, which is the challenge. For it means entering a sort of bleak half-way abyss in which one is all alone. Those who enter it find that they are too spiritual to find comfort in the world and yet not spiritual enough to find comfort in nirvana. It is at this point that the lustre of the spiritual path seems to fade, reason seems to lose its power and truth seems to be an empty mirage. Even people with great character sometimes need encouragement to continue on with their journey, and indeed this is the primary purpose of the world's scriptures and spiritual texts, such as the Tao Te Ching, the Dharmapada, the Bhagavad Gita, the Gospels, Kierkegaard's writings, etc. They are essentially written for those few who have already reached the very pinnacle of intellectual understanding. Their prime focus is to encourage such people to continue striving for the other side. The great value of these texts is that they can help steel the mind and fan a powerful love for truth.

In any case, enough of the introduction. Time to step out onto the road

The phrase "intellectually understanding the nature of reality" essentially means understanding the illusory nature of all things. Again, I refer the reader to The Wisdom of the Infinite for a detailed account of what this is about. But for those of you who already understand the logic of why things are illusory, the next step is to thoroughly break the spell of "objective existence" in every aspect of your daily life.

It has sometimes been said by Buddhist sages that life is like a dream, which is not a bad way of looking at the matter. It is obvi-

ously not equivalent to a dream, but it is *like* a dream in the sense that all we ever experience are appearances. Whether it be the distant stars, the nearby hills, the busy streets, the crowds of noisy people milling around, the molecules inside your body, the thoughts inside your mind – they are all appearances. Even your very own self is nothing more than an appearance.

It is very important to thoroughly understand what this means. There is no denying that the world appears to objectively exist, and for all intents and purposes, it does objectively exist, yet it is easy to see that it is nothing more than an apparition. It is similar to the way the sun appears to rise and set each day. We might directly experience the rising and setting of the sun with our own eyes, so to speak, yet the whole thing is an illusion produced by the rotating earth. It is an experience which is constructed out of our perspective as beings situated on the earth. In the same way, our experience of the world as an objective entity is a mirage generated out of a particular perspective, one that is centred around a belief in the self and reinforced by habit of thought. The objectivity of the world appears real on the surface, but it disappears the moment you begin to approach it.

All things are fundamentally like this. They appear to exist from certain angles, but they are not really there. I have always liked the Buddha's illustration of this, where he twirled a flame around and around in a circle so that it formed a ring of light. The ring of light certainly appears to exist and can be perceived by observers, and yet it has no existence outside of that perception. As soon as you look more closely at the twirling, you can see that the ring does not really exist at all. It is merely an illusion of perspective. Your very own self is like that ring. You could search for your self forever and you would never find it. For there is nothing to find.

The biggest mistake people make is grasping at the world as though it was real. They are subconsciously convinced that there must be a "bottom line" to Nature, that there is a fundamental realm of reality somewhere, that there is a particular form of Nature which comprises the one true reality. This is ultimately where all belief comes from, whether it be a belief in a particular god, or a belief in scientific atheism. Belief is the arbitrary

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

raising of a particular form over and above all other forms. It is also the essence of insanity.

The word “enlightenment” is sometimes used to mean *moksha* or liberation, and this is probably the best way to conceive of it. To be enlightened means to be liberated from all forms, all things, all events, all states, all hopes, all regrets, all happiness, and all suffering. It even means being liberated from the truth, from the spiritual path, from all knowledge and wisdom, even from enlightenment itself. In each moment, all of it has to be abandoned. Throw it all away as though it were a filthy piece of clothing. Whatever you think you might have achieved, whatever insights you might have gathered, whatever skills or merits you believe you have accumulated, whatever mystical experiences you have enjoyed, whatever social standing you possess – all of it needs to be tossed to the winds and allowed to disperse. Hold on to nothing whatsoever.

The greatest spiritual practice is to engage in no practice at all. The person who engages in such a practice single-mindedly ensures that his mind never clings to anything and never strives for anything. His meditation is to studiously avoid all forms of meditation. He does not seek any kind of understanding, nor any kind of mystical experience, nor any kind of altered state of consciousness. He does not seek these things because his every experience is already nirvanic in nature. He is already in nirvana. Even the most mundane aspects of his life are full expressions of nirvana. He knows that he can no more leave nirvana than he can enter into it.

The enlightened person is perfectly at home in all realms. He sees them all as equal expressions of ultimate reality. He does not have to enter a particular realm or mental state in order to feel more enlightened. He could travel into the depths of outer space and into other galaxies, or into other universes and dimensions, and yet he would not have moved an inch. He could dive inwardly into the most heavenly of mystical states and experience all that is sublime and timeless, and yet he would feel as though nothing has happened. For him, everything is already complete. And he too is complete.

In order to fully understand and engage in this practice, you need to abandon every preconceived idea of what you think nirvana

should be. You must not equate it with any kind of egotistical heaven. Accept nirvana for what it is and forget about what you would like it to be. Nirvana has no form, yet there is never any place where it is absent. It is constantly before our eyes in all of its glory, yet it is impossible to get a handle on it in any way. It has an infinite number of faces and yet none of them can be caught.

So treat everything that you experience for the appearance that it is. Or better yet, treat every experience as a temporary form that only exists in the moment. In this way, you can go beyond the perception that everything is an appearance, for that too lacks objective reality. The whole history of the Universe, with the Big Bang and the formation of the galaxies and stars, and the long, gradual evolution of life on earth eventually leading to the reign of the dinosaurs and the mammals, and then human history with the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, the Dark Ages, the scientific revolution and the advent of the modern world – all of it is nothing more than a fleeting form that exists in the moment and nowhere else. Break the spell of objective reality in all of its guises and slide into formlessness. Stop seeing yourself as a finite being who is stuck inside a concrete, three-dimensional world. Slip sideways out of existence, as it were, and enter the void of the All which is not really a void. Tune into your unborn nature and truly live.

The most important aspect of this practice is constancy of application. Moment after moment, day after day, do everything you can to be aware of your formless nature. No matter what the situation is, or what you are doing, or how you are feeling, or who you are talking to, make it your highest priority to constantly think of the Infinite. Try to avoid the habit of confining such a meditation to your spare time. It is relatively easy to think of the Infinite when you are alone and not doing anything else, but the real test comes when you are in the midst of the world and its distracting situations. That is when you should redouble your efforts and really apply yourself. The more you can think about God in those situations the more powerful your overall practice will be, and even your quieter times will become more fruitful. It is all about building up a head of steam and maintaining the momentum, and this requires the

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

discipline of single-mindedness. It is like using a magnifying glass to focus the sun's rays in order to set fire to a piece of paper. If you are constantly stopping and starting, or waving the magnifying glass about, you will never succeed.

The definitive sign that one is enlightened is when one is able to see into the nature of reality with an instantaneous application of will, without any need to engage in laborious mental processes or having to solve philosophical problems. And this can only be achieved when you become intimately familiar with the ins and outs of nirvana, when you know it like the back of your hand. This is the great prize of spiritual expertise. It is only at this point that the real benefits of truthful living start to emerge in terms of perfect freedom, utter certainty, pure spontaneity, fearlessness, immeasurable peace, and so on.

While the ultimate spiritual practice is to engage in no practice at all, sometimes you do need to engage in other practices in order to keep the mind focused. The practice of no practice can be difficult to sustain throughout the day, particularly in the early stages. It is easy to become distracted and lose sight of what needs to be done. It is a bit like experiencing narcolepsy, in that one often slides into unconsciousness of reality – that is to say, back into ordinary consciousness – without even realizing what is happening. And then twenty minutes later you suddenly wake up and only then do you realize that you have been fast asleep all that while! When this happens – as it will, again and again – all you can do is write the whole thing off as the workings of karma and climb back into the saddle once more. There is no point in re-terminating yourself over such lapses. They will invariably happen. It is better to look to the future, vow to improve, and move on.

One way to keep the mind focused is to exploit your ego's instinctive desire for happiness and use it to direct your attention to the All. For example, you can train your mind to view every aspect of Nature as an artistic masterpiece. It is easy to see that everything is immensely beautiful in an aesthetic sense. The colours, textures and sounds of even the most mundane things in life possess a sublime beauty if you know how to see it. Most people block out this beauty because they are so caught up in their daily worries, but there

is no reason why you should be trapped in misery like them and go around being cranky at everything. You are well within your rights to experience the magical beauty of reality in everything that you do. It is an excellent way to find joy in the All and help free the mind from worldly attachments. All it takes is a little time and practice until it becomes second nature.

I have found through experience that many people who embark on the path to enlightenment are afraid to enjoy God. This relates to the earlier point about being motivated by the wrong reasons – namely, by disgust and anger, rather than by love and joy. A lot of people become too caught up in the crassness of the human race and the dire situation of modern society, and they waste their lives loathing everything, including themselves. This is surely the height of stupidity. To hate something, whatever it might be, is to hate Nature itself, for Nature is the root cause of everything that happens. People are essentially flawed robots, as far as this matter is concerned. It is not their fault if they grow up with lots of bugs in their programming. If an opportunity presents itself to engage in some debugging, then fine. Go for it. But it is not your responsibility to worry and fret over the outcome.

A genius is able to shoulder the responsibility of the world and work diligently for the sake of other people's welfare, yet for him it is no burden at all. Freedom and lightness is his default state of being. So give up all your cares and keep your mind in the Infinite. Don't be afraid to enjoy God. Indeed, it is very important that you learn how to flourish in your infinite nature and take delight in it. It will make you a far better teacher in the long run.

In everything that you do, treat each moment as though it were the very first moment of creation. Beginningless time and the present moment are the same. There is no before, and no after. Everything is as it should be – utterly pure and innocent. We literally live our lives in the Garden of Eden. What is there to fix?

Another example of an exercise you can do involves making love to everything that happens. You can even mentally verbalize this love, if you want. Sometimes, I like to walk around the place and mentally affirm my love

MISCELLANEOUS BITS AND PIECES

for everything that I see. "I love the way that piece of paper is crumpled up like that", or "I love the way that tree is fluttering lightly in the breeze", or "I love the way all that hair is growing out of that man's ear." This might seem like a corny thing to do, but using words to mentally verbalize such practices can help concentrate the mind and lock it into the right attitude. It is not unlike the way writing can help crystallize your thoughts and bring them into greater clarity.

Another exercise involves affirming the truth that everything is literally your self, simply by reversing or subverting habitual thought. For example, you can view the world as your body, and your body as the world. See how the distant stars are as familiar as the freckles on your legs, while the blood coursing throughout your body and the synapses firing inside your brain are as alien as the stars. The wind rustling through the trees is your consciousness moving. The thoughts appearing in your mind are like the clouds which appear in the sky. A loud noise erupts and the heart beats faster. A decision is made in the brain and the world changes. Where exactly is this boundary between self and other!

In any case, these are just a few examples of what can be done to keep the mind focused on the All. I am sure there are countless other exercises you can devise. Feel free to be creative. Experiment and improvise. Try not

to settle into any one kind of practice, though. Mix it up. Always be alert, intelligent and flexible. Learn to read your moods and adapt your practice accordingly.

To recap

If you are planning to cross the road, then do it whole-heartedly. Burn all of your bridges and escape routes and go at it as hard as you can. Generate the momentum needed to reach the other side. This momentum will be your greatest asset during that bleak period when you are neither part of the world, nor part of nirvana. Use your ego against itself and exploit its desire for happiness by seeking joy in the All. Be intelligent and creative with your practices and ground them all in the core practice of no practice. Keep doing this day after day after day.

In the end, the whole spiritual path to enlightenment boils down to belief. Not in the sense of blindly accepting articles of faith, but in the sense of having utter conviction in the truth. You really have to believe, with the whole of your being, in what you know to be true. Intellectually, you know that everything is nirvana. *So believe it.* And keep believing it, over and over, all the time, no matter what the situation. If you can apply this belief in a sustained manner, you will find yourself on the other side of the road in no time. Indeed, you will find that there has never been any road in the first place.¹³⁴

THE THINKING MAN’S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

**MISOGYNY
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“WHAT IS A MISOGYNIST?” (N.D.)

“The Disciple asked: ‘What is a misogynist?’”

“The Master replied: ‘I do not know; but it is used by cowards as a term of abuse for those who say what everybody thinks. Cowards are the men who cannot approach a woman without going out of their minds and becoming treacherous. They buy the woman’s favour by serving their friends’ heads on a silver platter; and they absorb so much femininity that they see with her eyes and feel with her feelings. Agreed: there are things you do not mention in everyday conversation, and you do not tell your woman what is the essence of her gender; but one is sometimes allowed to write it. Schopenhauer put it best, Nietzsche not badly, Joséphin Péladan is the master; Thackeray wrote *Men’s Wives*, but that was suppressed; Balzac unmasked Caroline in *The Physiology of Marriage*, and *Petty Troubles of Married Life*; Otto Weininger, having discovered the treachery when he was twenty, did not wait for the revenge but left the scene.’” [August Strindberg]¹³⁵

THE THINKING MAN’S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

DAVE SIM'S THE MERGED VOID 1995-2001

Introduction

Dave Sim is notorious as the patron saint of independent comics publishers, having written, illustrated and published Cerebus on a monthly basis since the late seventies. He plans to continue doing so until issue number 300. [update: series now completed]

For several years Sim used Cerebus to explore issues concerning women. Sim's self-proclaimed "misogyny" (To quote: "It wouldn't be that big a stretch to categorize my writing as Hate Literature against women ... in this Fascistic Feminist country.") reached a crescendo in issue #186, in which Sim dropped his fictional shell entirely and spoke in the first person. Sim described what he sees as the archetypal male-female relationship, in which the "Female Void devours the Male Light."

But let's hear Dave Sim speaking for himself¹³⁶ ...

- Quotations -

"Emotion, whatever the Female Void would have you believe, is not a more Exalted State than is Thought. In point of fact, I think Emotion is animalistic, serpent-brain stuff. Animals do not Think, but I am reasonably certain that they have Emotions. 'Eating this makes me Happy.' 'When my fur is all wet and I am cold, it makes me Sad.' 'Ooo! Puppies!' 'It makes me Excited to Chase the Ball!' Reason, as any husband can tell you, doesn't stand a chance in an argument with Emotion... this was the fundamental reason, I believe, that women were denied the vote for so long."

"Behind this...lies the Greater Void, the Omnivorous Engine which drives every... institutionalised waste of human time and energy, which drives, in point of fact, our entire degraded society. The wife and kids."

"In one of those Poor Us studies for which the Emotional Female Void is notorious, it was pointed out that after a divorce, the average male standard of living rises... the average female standard of living drops... I think the...explanation is that the excision of a five-to-six- foot leech from the surface of a human body is going to have more of its own blood in its own veins. Unless the leech finds another body, it is going to go hungry."

"In labouring to fill the insatiable Void Need for material possessions at home, his time and his energy and his spirit disappear into the Vaginal Bottom Line of the workplace."

"The Male Light and the Female Void: Seminal Energy and Omnivorous Parasite."

"If you look at her and see anything besides emptiness, fear and emotional hunger, you are looking at the parts of yourself which have been consumed to that point."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

"It wouldn't be that big a stretch to categorize my writing as Hate Literature against women ... in this Fascistic Feminist country."

"Writings from 'Reads' by Dave Sim" (1995)

Journalism had been an early casualty in the war between the Female Void and the Male Light. "How do you *feel*?" had virtually replaced "who, what, where, when and why" as the journalistic cornerstone. "What are you *feeling right now*?" Every once in a great while, the Female void would run afoul of some military figure or a police captain or a fire marshal: some male who had not been devoured whole, who still had something of himself left to call his own. His answer would begin, "I think ..." or "I believe ..." and he would proceed to enunciate a belief, a principle, an ideal which was, to him, fundamental. The Female or Male Feminist (they differ only cosmetically from each other) interviewing him would be dogged in his or her pursuit: "But how do you *feel* as an individual, as a person, as a human being?" The interview subject would invariably look confused, discomfited at this. After all, he had just *answered* the question. He would paraphrase his belief, his principle, his ideal. "I think ..." "I believe ..." At this point the he/she interviewer switched, invariably, to another satellite feed: to another journalist or a psychologist or a social worker. Reasoning, Thinking Males with Systems of Belief, made for very bad television.

I watched an interview the other night on *CBC Prime Time* with a nineteen-year-old girl from an old-fashioned (which is to say "principled") Vietnamese family. She had gotten pregnant during her last year of high school. She knew that she had brought "shame" to her father, to her family. "But this is a free country, isn't it?" she asks the camera. "That means you can do whatever you want, doesn't it?" The camera was indul-

gently mute on the subject. The girl moved on. She *felt* scared that she was going to be a mother. She *felt* unhappy that she had been disowned by her father, but she also, you know, *felt* happy when her mother called to tell her that she would answer any questions that she had about pregnancy. She *felt* most enthusiastically about her school guidance counsellor because he had, you know, just listened to her "spill her guts" and hadn't tried to, you know, make her *feel* bad. At no time, needless to say, did the word "think" cross her lips. There is, of course, no need for her to think. The taxpayers of Canada will pay for all of her baby's needs. She didn't need to be made to *feel* bad. All that she needed was someone to direct her to the appropriate agency. The rest of it was just paperwork. It's a free country, isn't it?

That means you can do whatever you want.
Doesn't it?

Unbidden, the image of the Cerebus Theatre swam to the surface of Viktor Davis' awareness. He turned away from his typewriter and allowed the picture to coalesce in his mind's eye.

The *Cerebus* readership was there, composed in some (small? large?) measure of females with their male housepets. He squinted, endeavouring to see if any male was chafing at the invisible conduits and metaphorical tubing which drained his life, his essence, his energy as surely and as effectively as any fictional vampire. Cats' eyes gleamed in the darkness, filled with malice. A couple of rows back an obese brunette was stripping away chunks of brain tissue from a thin, pale youth with a spotted face. His head lolled against his shoulder in her direction, his face radiant with ecstasy. He turned to her, his eyes half-lidded. He smiled and mouthed, "I love you." She smiled back at him, indulgently. His eyes closed once more. She stuck out her sandpaper tongue, dotted with brains and blood, in Viktor Davis' direction and then cackled loudly. The youth giggled quietly to himself.

* "Writings from 'Reads' by Dave Sim," *The Thinking Man's Minefield*, 1995. Available at: <http://www.theabsolute.net/misogyny/sim.html#texts>

Available from Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc. P.O. Box 1674, Station C, Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4R2, Canada By phone: 519/576-7820 or 519/576-0610 Fax: 519/576-0955 © 1995 Dave Sim (Extract included here with the permission of Dave Sim)

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

To the far left, in the front row, the white husk of a heavy-set man in his early thirties squirmed in the direction of his Lady and Master, his features reflecting pain, confusion and fear. She held his forearm in front of her as if they were bound, one to the other, but in such a way that she was also holding him slightly apart from her. Viktor Davis could see that the fellow had been a quick meal - little more than a snack, by the looks of things. Traces of dried brain-matter, hard and uninviting, encrusted what little there was left of the top of his head. She looked very, very hungry. Every few seconds she turned around in her seat, the hunger in her gaze sweeping across the rows to her immediate rear. Females touched by that insatiable stare hunched a little closer to their own housepets, a menacing growl rumbling low in their throats.

Viktor Davis turned back to his typewriter. "There is no cure for willful stupidity," he typed and then sat back, cigarette in hand, to contemplate the words.

He thought of the scene in *Cisco Pike* where a character played by Harry Dean Stanton worries aloud to the title character (played by Kris Kristofferson) that he doesn't think he will be able to "get it up" with one of the two women they have picked up for the evening. "Man," says Kristofferson, "it's not your body they're after, it's your goddamn soul." Stanton blinks several times and a look of relief crosses his features. "Thanks, man" he says.

There is no cure for willful stupidity.

Yes, said Viktor Davis, I am being brutal here.

In contemplating the full weight of popular culture, television, movies, magazines and newspapers, I see the completely unopposed advocacy of Merged Permanence and I think that a definite brutality is called for. The Male Light is jeopardized on all fronts, in my view. The Devouring Rapacious Female Void is not a thing to be taken lightly, to be explained away, to be rationalised into neutrality. I'm not here to make you feel good. I am here to make you think. And to make you think, I have to make you see.

Emotion, whatever the Female Void would have you believe, is not a more Exalted State than is Thought. In point of fact, I think Emo-

tion is animalistic, serpent-brain stuff. Animals do not Think, but I am reasonably certain that they have Emotions. "Eating this makes me Happy." "When my fur is all wet and I am cold, it makes me Sad." "Ooo! Puppies!" "It makes me Excited to Chase the Ball!" Reason, as any husband can tell you, doesn't stand a chance in an argument with Emotion. There are no rules to Emotional Argument. You simply wander around in rhetorical circles until you feel Happy again, and then the argument is over. This was the fundamental reason, I believe, that women were (rightly) denied the vote for so long. In order to move a civilisation forward, an overview is required. You have to be able to step back and examine the structure of a problem. This is what Thinking, Reasoning, is. Every political campaign waged in the G-7 countries has as its centerpiece Job Creation. Polls give the politicians a list of voter concerns. Job Creation is at the top of the list. Ergo, the politicians promise Jobs. Because the Female Void dominates proceedings (simply because the Female Void dominates everything), a candidate is elected based on how he or she makes the electorate Feel. We Feel we can Trust this candidate. No effort is made to step back and ask, "Isn't the whole *point* of technology to *eliminate* work?" Reason would tell you that you can either eliminate (or limit) technology or you can eliminate (or limit) jobs. It is not possible to have it both ways. The Female Void Emotional response is that we *have* to have it both ways. And so we do. And so the problem gets worse instead of better.

I think of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, the Continental Congress, Illuminated Thinking, the Finest Hour of the Male Light, dealing with the specific problems of Independence. What did they want to do? What did they *not* want to do? What innovations had past cultures brought to bear on limiting the ability of government to interfere in the lives of its citizens? Where had other cultures gone wrong and what could be done to prevent and correct those mistakes? They did brilliant work. *Brilliant* work. I am reasonably certain that such Male Light yet exists in our day and age, and I am equally certain that it avoids the political arena like the plague. In our Female Void Age it is the sole job of elected officials to

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

make the electorate feel good about them frequently enough to get re-elected. Re-election is largely a matter of provoking a positive emotional response within a narrow time frame through televised portrayal, the raising of sufficient funds to make that televised portrayal ubiquitous, and (apart from that) having the good fortune to have no deviations from the Female Void Emotional Perception of Merit (drugs, boozing, women on the side) come to light at an inopportune moment. We do not elect leaders. We elect televised portrayals of Husbands of Fathers. Women (because of the double standard of Female Void Emotional Perception) are elected as televised portrayals of Good Career Women. If she looks like she would be a Good Boss, it is not necessary that she be a Wife and/or Mother. Thinking, the ability to Reason through a problem and put a solution into effect, is very low on the list of priorities, if it is on the list at all. Legislative Assemblies are filled, throughout the civilised world, with televised portrayals capable of provoking an emotional response in their respective constituents. We have been treading water for some time and show no indication of endeavouring to swim any time in the foreseeable future. Political positions are judged on the Emotional Basis of whether they are Popular or Unpopular. Popular is good. Unpopular is bad. Most political positions based on Reason are Unpopular. Most political positions based on Emotion are Popular - provided the Emotion provoked is happiness; if the Emotion provoked is unhappiness or anxiety or uneasiness, then that political position is Unpopular and therefore bad.

Does this make any sense to you? Or does it just make you feel bad?

Male Light does not Merge. Thinking, Reason, is best served by solitude, isolation. Intellect "works through" problems, changing impediment into insight, oversight into overview, stalemate into solution. A "Big Picture" emerges at the "end of the day", but the day itself is long, composed exclusively of examination and re-examination. History is filled with examples of Great Minds being brought together by the Merged Void's emotional and idiosyncratic belief (or, rather, *feeling*) that "two heads are better than

one". On occasion, they are able to "strike sparks" off one another or they manage to trigger mutual or complementary insights in their respective fields of endeavour through interaction. It is far more likely that they will pass a pleasant hour or two exchanging small talk on a variety of mundane subjects and then go their separate ways, none the worse for intellectual wear and tear, much to the collective disappointment of the Assembled Voids who are without a glimmer of understanding of intellectual processes and who assume that the Male Light is the same as the Merged Void, "only different". More than one Society Hostess having brought together (say) a Nobel Prize-Winning Author and a Critically Acclaimed Playwright at her dinner party (after the fashion of breeding one thoroughbred horse to another) has been disillusioned to find, upon their return, no shining literary offspring in evidence, their conversation dominated instead by the Yankees' chance of holding first place in the American League East.

Light does not Breed. Only Jackie Onassis (and like-minded Voids) could perceive her Arrow Shirt Ad Son as having anything in common with his late father, apart from a weakness for blonde actresses.

"Two heads are better than one" has much in common with "two can live as cheaply as one". It represents, at its core, the Merged Void raking the Male Light with its Emotion-based fingernails. There is little empirical evidence to support either statement. As the Emotional Female Void devours what is left of the civilisation which has been built by the Rational Male Light, it has extrapolated the former maxim into Larger and More Efficient Voids ("If two heads are better than one, think how good a dozen heads will be!"). Study Groups, Steering Committees, Regional Advisory Boards, Crown Commissions, etcetera, etcetera, ad nauseam. While it is a basic truth that Light does not Merge, that Light does not Breed, Voids do nothing else. The Merged Void represents Consensus. It is a purely Emotion-based belief (or, rather, *feeling*) that through Consensus, one arrives at "Truth" (or, rather, Truth).

In a recent interview, Eddie Campbell, a Considerable Male Light in this Age of the

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

Female Void, discussed his experience as a brief (and much amused) participant in the creativity-by-committee of "Comic's Greatest World" (hyperbolic nomenclature being a hallmark of the Merged Void). He observed that the family cat in the Campbell household had been named by committee and that it had taken a full quorum of family members the better part of several hours to arrive at "Puss". If one looks closely at the work that is done by the Merged Voids which are devouring our culture, much of it could most charitably be described as "naming cats". The period of time it takes to arrive at "Puss" is directly proportional to the number of "heads which are better than one" assigned to the task.

As a parenthetical aside, several meetings were held at Dark Horse to determine whether or not there would be an apostrophe in "Comics' Greatest World".

What motivates this behaviour? What informs the sensibilities of those who sit tapping pencil against pad, looking thoughtful, portraying themselves as the Good and Dutiful Committee Member? What keeps them from standing up and raising the point of order (Mr. Chairperson) that if brains were dynamite, there wouldn't be enough in this room to blow up a paper bag?

Patriarchy? The imposition of Male Power which restrains and endlessly postpones the Dawning of the Glorious Female Golden Age?

I beg to differ.

Behind this Lesser Void of White Collar Make-Work Programs, the stultifying sameness of ass-covering and ass-kissing, the endless postponement of decision-making in favour of "further study", "further discussion", lies the Greater Void, the Omnivorous Engine which drives every committee, every study group, every institutionalised waste of human time and energy, which drives, in point of fact, our entire degraded society.

The Wife and Kids.

If we're going to be able to afford that new dining-room set. I'm going to have to get that raise. If I'm going to be able to get enough money for the down payment on the house, I'm going to have to pull a lot of overtime. If I'm going to pay for the new living-room furniture and the ballet lessons and the tuition

at the private school, I'm going to have to get that promotion.

In one of those Poor Us studies for which the Emotional Female Void is notorious, it was pointed out that after a divorce, the average male standard of living rises by (pick your own ungodly number) percent. The average female standard of living drops by (pick your own ungoddlessly Poor Us number) percent. This was presented (of course) as living proof of the unfairness of the Global Economic Structure. I think the more rational explanation is that the excision of a five-to-six-foot leech from the surface of a human body is going to have more of its own blood in its own veins. Unless the leech finds another body, it is going to go hungry. (*Please don't call us leeches, huffed the leeches, we prefer the term "asset-challenged".*)

Corporations, a living example of the Merged Void if ever there was one, always show a preference for the Family Man when it comes to promotions and positions of responsibility. In the case of Merged Voids, as with most other permutations of existence, It Takes One to Know One. Corporations (or companies of any size, really) wink knowingly at the Little Woman and Her Brood. Once the Male Light has disappeared over the Event Horizon, once the manacle of gold has been pounded into place on the ring finger of his left hand, he is, indeed, a Wage Slave. What goes unsaid (or, rather, what has gone unsaid until now) is that he serves Two Mistresses, Twin Voids. As he labours to make his mortgage payments, pay for groceries, little Axelrod's College Fund, the new sofa, the new drapes, the bigger house, the Company can rest easy. In labouring to fill the insatiable Void Need for material possessions at home, his time and his energy and his spirit disappear into the Vaginal Bottom Line of the workplace. Divorce, once badly thought of, has yielded even greater benefits. The employee with a Wife and Mistress, and later a Wife and an Ex-Wife (and still later a Wife, an Ex-Wife and a Mistress) is very much rocking to the beat of the Merged Void. Assuming he's going to get a little ahead of himself, the Bank Void steps in with an easy-payment schedule.

Ah, success.

Viktor Davis smiled to himself.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

He had been fascinated by power all of his life, and in the Wife and Kids he had found its greatest manifestation in human society. He turned and regarded his readership once more.

A bright-eyed fellow in a dark-blue suit - his shirt lightly starched, his red-and-black-striped tie neatly pressed - locked eyes with Viktor Davis. He smiled and in his smile there was great pity. Over his shoulder there was visible a slim, young woman with green eyes. She lapped delicately at the open wound within the desiccated remains of his temple. "I understand what you're talking about," he said. "We know this couple, see? Man, they are just the absolute picture of what you described. What you don't realise is that there *are* good women in the world. You just haven't found the right one, yet. That's all."

Viktor Davis took a drag from his cigarette and expelled a series of small smoke rings. The bright-eyed fellow and Viktor Davis stared into each other's eyes for a period of several seconds. One corner of the bright-eyed fellow's smile twitched slightly and the merest trace of anxiety crossed his features. The slim, young woman took a deep bite from the wound. He closed his eyes and the smile broadened. "You'll see," he said, leaning towards her. "You'll see."

Viktor Davis turned back to his typewriter and his pile of notes, which he began thumbing through absent-mindedly. One of the scrawled observations on a torn piece of yellow-lined notepaper caught his eye. *The Male Light and the Female Void: Seminal Energy and Omnivorous Parasite. As ancient as the sacrifice of a Corn King. As ubiquitous as a hundred generations of Roman Catholics eating the flesh and drinking the blood of a Great Prophet.*

Paper-clipped to that one:

What was the essence of Jesus' philosophy but the reformation of Judaism as constituted in his time? "You consume an elephant and excrete a gnat," he scolded. In regarding the centuries-long work that Merged Voids had committed upon the Word of God, layers of interpretation on layers of interpretation, the Word itself so obscured that little remained but the Profession of Interpretation itself, he

had attempted to inject a note of sanity into the proceedings. "You know, if you just say *do unto others as you would have them do unto you*, you could probably knock a good four hundred pages out of the rule book right there." What he failed to recognise was that the Letter of the Law is the province of the Merged Void. It is only the Male Light that is concerned with its Spirit.

Too sensible.

Too much Light.

Bang Bang Bang

I am alone, said Viktor Davis. I am not lonely. There is a big difference.

I have not had a Merged Permanence in my life for five years. It took at least three of those five years for my brain to start functioning properly again. In the aftermath of being part of a Merged Void, all that is left for some time is Void Residue: Emptiness, Fear and Emotional Hunger. It is these three and the endless, fruitless search for a Permanent Cure that the Emotional Female Void calls Love. If you merge with that sensibility, you will share in its sickness. No matter what you pour into it, it remains empty; no matter how you reassure it, it remains afraid; no matter how much of yourself you permit it to devour, it remains hungry. If you look at her and see anything besides emptiness, fear and emotional hunger, you are looking at the parts of yourself which have been consumed to that point.

The ability to be alone, to have isolation as your primary state of existence, will serve you in good stead in any situation in which you find yourself. The ability to live in Merged Permanence teaches you only how to function within the context of Another's neuroses, inadequacies and failings. It teaches you how to use your own neuroses, inadequacies and failings as both cudgel and petition. When the Merged Permanence ends, whether next week, next year, five years from now, ten years from now, you are left with completely useless life skills, emptiness, fear and emotional hunger.

Fuck dancing. Let's talk about Art.

While, for Viktor Davis, it was a source of great amusement to watch Captains of Industry, Pillars of the Community, the Suit-and-Tie Brigade devoured by the Emotional Fe-

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

male Void, their resources, lives and energy disappearing over the Event Horizon of Merged Permanence, the Joke, to put it mildly, lost something of its flavour when it came to Artists. Would that he could conjure a podium, a venue, and assemble all the creative Male Light in one place.

Women, he would say, are not Muses. Muses are Muses. To confuse one with the other is to mistake the Devouring Void for the Seminal Light. Earthly Women and the Muses are ancient, sworn enemies. The battlefield is the Creative Male. On the one side is the encampment of Discordia, of Diana, of Venus located in his Heart and in his Groin. On the other is the Bastion of Calliope, Clio, Erato, Euterpe, Melpomene, Polyhymnia, Terpsichore, Thalia and Urania, in his Brain and in his Mind. The Muses are tolerant and understanding of border raids, skirmishes, and harassing maneuvers. Throughout the history of the Male Light, there have been few painters, few writers, who have not had a She Who Must Be Accommodated. For some it was their mothers. For many their wives, their mistresses, their girlfriends. For many it was their daughters, a favourite waitress, a stripper, a whore. To the Muses, they are all one. Mother, whore, wife, daughter, stripper, waitress, mistress, girlfriend.

"Women inspire men to do great works, And then distract us from carrying them out." - Oscar Wilde

It is up to each individual Male in whom the creative fire burns, in the words of Pater, "as a hard, gem-like flame" to decide whether to maintain that radiance, whether to settle for a wavery, uncertain light, or whether to extinguish it altogether. The individual Male decides for himself which side in the ancient battle is the better armed, who gets the best reinforcements, the most effective weapons, whose barricades are solid and well-fortified, and whose are makeshift and ramshackle. John Lennon maintained through his House-Husband years of baking bread and minding the baby that he had "lost his Muse". Untruer words were never spoken. He drove his Muse from him. The forces within his Groin and his Heart, armed to the teeth, legion upon legion upon legion, surrounded those forces in his Brain and in his Mind, and the battle was lost.

John Lennon was a triumph for the malignant forces of Discordia, of Diana, of Venus.

In my view, it comes down to which you think is Paper Currency and which you think is Gold. To women, to the Emotional Female Void, their emotions, their feelings, are the Gold at the center of their economic system. Sex is the Paper Currency which represents one aspect of those emotions. To me Sex is the Gold, female emotions the valueless bits of paper interposed between myself and the treasure. As the Emotional Female Void has become pre-eminent in our age, men have been offered two choices: either perceive Emotion as Gold or do without the Paper Currency. Of course, for men, the proposition becomes: "Either acknowledge that Paper Currency is more valuable than Gold, or do without the Gold." The majority of men have capitulated happily. Yes, yes, Paper Currency is more valuable. Can I have some Gold now? The answer, of course, is no. Why do you want Paper Currency (Gold) when I'm offering you all of this Gold (Paper Currency)? Women in the context of Merged Permanence develop a profound jealousy of their own bodies. For most men, the great myth of Merged Permanence is that you will "get it whenever you want it". Over a period of time, this becomes adjusted to "getting it regularly". Inevitably, this declines into "getting it on the rare occasions when she'll let me have some". There have been many historical precedents for women withdrawing sexual favours in order to assert their Power. Today, it is a worldwide, firmly entrenched phenomenon. "Women Who Refuse to Have Sex With Their Husbands" is not a topic that you are going to see documented in the Void-dominated media; it certainly is not going to be the subject of a week-long series on *Oprah* or *Donahue*. I venture to say if you want to find the leading cause of Domestic Violence, the subject is worth a second look. It is an intrinsic part of the Emotional Void's nature to focus on Symptoms when examination of the Problem is what is called for.

Viktor Davis thumbed through the now-diminishing stack of papers. He finds himself drawn to several sheets of white notepaper torn from a small pad. "Coco Chanel", "Colleen Doran". He scans the ensuing sentence

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

fragments quickly and then reviews them more carefully. "There are exceptions." The "are" is underlined several times. "Sensibility is an altogether different matter from outward manifestation. In seeking to identify and characterise the Female Void, Viktor Davis was attempting to show his reader that there was a much larger game afoot. What appeared to be Male Dominance of the global village amounted to *pay no attention to the Wife and Kids behind the curtain*. In a genuine Patriarchy there would be no such thing as marriage. In point of fact, in a Patriarchy, Merged Permanence would probably be illegal in a contractual sense. The Wisdom of Fathers (contemplating the inevitability of the Male Heart and Groin compelling their owner to capitulate to a Devouring emotional Void) would mandate that no monetary resources could be sacrificed on the alter of the Would-Be Venus." This was followed by several false starts which were crossed out. Beneath these, Viktor Davis had written "get to the point".

Indeed.

The point, of course, was that the Male Light was not the exclusive property of Men. It was very *close* to being the exclusive property of Men, but as Viktor Davis had reminded himself, "there *are* exceptions". In the case of self-publishing (Viktor Davis' idea of self-publishing was best summed up by Don Simpson's promotional slogan: "One Comic Book. One Universe. Why Pay More?"), there were the indisputable contributions of Colleen Doran and Teri Wood. The problem, of course, in acknowledging exceptions in the Female Void-Dominated Age, was that exception was always extrapolated into being a Universal Truth. This was the shaky foundation upon which Feminism was (and is) built. There were (and are) women who begin their sentences with "I believe ..." or "I think ..." And they *do* think. They have reasoned and coherent world views. They realise that inspiration is simply the starting point, that without dedication, hard work, and an avoidance of the Rapacious Voids which dominate our civilisation, the "hard, gem-like flame" becomes wavery or is extinguished. This sensibility occurs more often - *far* more often - in men than it does in women. This is not bigotry, this is not sexism, it is a fact which is supported by

empirical evidence. The Bronte Sisters are not William Shakespeare, Madame Curie is not Albert Einstein, Florence Nightingale is not Louis Pasteur, Penny Marshall is not Orson Welles, Joan of Arc is not Jesus Christ. The Male Light is not a genderless thing, but it occurs where it occurs and *sometimes* (not often) it occurs in women. Where the Male Light occurs, it must overcome all manner of adversity, not the least of which is the war between the Heart and the Mind. The mistake Feminism makes is in thinking (or, rather, *feeling*) that legislation can be passed to eliminate adversity and, in this, it has been quite successful, to the general detriment of society. The Founders of Feminism, those with Good Brains and the ability to Reason and Contribute, in regarding the babbling cacophony of the "I feel ..." Brigade they have unleashed upon the world in the name of numerical parity in all areas of human endeavour, have much to reflect on. I doubt that they do (or will). But I think they should.

Viktor Davis reread the passage about Patriarchy and sat staring out the window for some time. The balancing act in which he was engaged was a delicate one. In trying not to belabour his points, there was a real danger of passing over salient arguments too quickly. The Emotional Void relied almost exclusively on contradictory anecdotal evidence. "Not *all* women are like that: I have a friend who ..." Overarching beliefs, large verities, universal truths were dismissed as generalisations. Viktor Davis stared out the window for several more minutes and then began typing.

"Men like Cars. Viktor Davis doesn't like Cars. Viktor Davis is a Man."

These observations were all true statements. Was it a syllogism? Or was there another name for it? Viktor Davis was uncertain. To the Reasoning Mind and to the Emotional Void, the fundamental structure was sound. They were all true statements, though they appeared contradictory. Using those three statements as a template, Viktor Davis had spent much of his adult life attempting to Reason with the Female Emotional Void. In each case, whatever success he had had (and he had had very little success) had been temporary. He considered his lack of success to be central to the Issue at Hand. Within the context of the Female Emotional Void, no

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

general observation could be considered sound if there existed an anecdotal refutation.

Birth and Death.

There is too much Birth in the world and there is not enough Death.

How can you say that? wails the Female Emotional Void. *Just the other day in the newspaper, I read about a family of four who were ...*

I'm not saying, interrupted Viktor Davis, that people don't die. What I am saying is that there is not enough Death. I'm not saying, he added, that babies don't make people ecstatically happy. I'm saying that there is too much Birth. Those are two very different things. If you could create a four-dimensional model consisting of two spheres, one representing Birth and the other representing Death, the former sphere, observed over the last four hundred years, would be growing larger and larger, faster and faster. The latter sphere would be growing smaller and smaller, faster and faster.

Our planet will double its population in the next ten years. Given that it is our society's collective Emotional Void Response that we are *not* overpopulated, my Reasoning Mind is moved to ask, when does overpopulation occur? If eight billion is not overpopulated, then what is? Fifteen billion? Eighty billion? One hundred billion?

I'm trying very hard to paint you the Big Picture. Patriarchy, to me, is a red herring, a false premise. Which is more successful, Birth or Death? I'm asking you to picture the two as Organisms. The individual, lower-case births and deaths which make up those two Organisms are like molecules. A molecule within an elephant is not an elephant. Birth is Female. Death is Male.

Which is more successful?

If you are unable to see what I'm saying, then I think that proves my point. The Emotional Void is winning. This is not a Patriarchy. It is a Matriarchy. If it ever was a Patriarchy, it was in a time and place where there was a balance between Death and Birth. You'd have to go back a long, long way to find a civilisation and an era where that was true.

Life out of balance.

We are already past the point of no return. I think it is no coincidence that the last organ-

ized attempt in this century to institutionalize genocide (the Nazi Death Camps) constituted little more than a flesh wound inflicted by the Death Sphere upon the Birth Sphere. World War II ended with the dropping of two Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I don't, for one minute, deny the human suffering involved, the families and cultures which were decimated by the conflict. What I am saying is that We Have a Problem. We seem to be unable to confront the fact that Death has become impotent. Even if we applied all of the resources of technology to building Space Age Death Camps, even if we could arrive at a consensus of Who has to Go (everyone with blue eyes, anyone over the age of twenty-five anyone under six feet tall - I'll use three examples which would include myself in the hopes that you can understand my point, here), it would take several generations before we could even make a dent in the overwhelming advantage that Birth holds over Death.

Instead, we apply the enormous resources of the state of Michigan to stopping Jack Kevorkian from assisting terminally ill patients to commit suicide.

Life out of balance.

WAY out of balance.

WAY WAY WAY out of balance.

The Universal Mother, Birth, has an agenda. It is a very short agenda, consisting of two items: One, childbirth is an inherent right. Two, absolute safety for everyone is the goal of human society. On both counts, She is doing very, very well. In considering a worldwide population of eight billion people, the *relative* number of people who are dying in wars (or "wars", rather) is very, very small. The *relative* number of people who are dying from diseases is very, very small. The *relative* number of people who are dying from famine is very, very small.

The only answers to these points are Void Emotional, Void Anecdotal. "How would *you feel* if your family died in a war? How would *you feel* if a friend or relative of yours were dying of AIDS or leukemia? How would *you feel* if everyone in your neighbourhood were in the grip of famine?" To me, these are not answers. The very underpinnings of the questions imply the Problem. It is Feeling, rather than Reason, which has brought us to this situation.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

I'm pointing out to you that we are in the back seat of a car (ALL of us). There is no one in the driver's seat. As a matter of fact, the steering wheel fell off a few decades back. The accelerator is glued to the floor. The doors are welded shut. We are going faster and faster and faster. Take offence, if you will, at my impertinence in pointing this out. Call me heartless, a cold fish (believe me, I'm used to it). Ostracize me and form a worldwide *We're Just Out For a Sunday Drive in the Country* organization. Print up *Faster is Fun* posters. Hug and Kiss each other and Feel Good about yourselves. The Problem is Still There.

Here we go, eh?

Fear. Our Merged Female Emotional Void Heritage is nearly universal. We are being made afraid of everything. Bad things do happen. Bad things happen to everyone. When was the last time a Bad Thing happened to you? Not a bad thing, a Bad Thing? The best part about Fear and Lifestyle is that you will eventually be proven right. It may take a few weeks, it may take a year, five years, ten years, but if you face each day Numb with the Certainty that Something Bad is Going to Happen, it eventually will. I knew it. I just knew something Bad was going to happen today.

A Coward dies a Thousand Deaths, the Hero dies but Once.

I agree with that sentiment, except for the "Hero" part. I'd replace that with "the Thinking Person".

During the great polio epidemics of this century, whole neighbourhoods were scrubbed clean. Pesticides were sprayed on every tree, every inch of lawn. Whole communities mobilised in a concerted effort to eliminate any likely or even remotely possible source for the pestilence. When the polio vaccine was discovered, it was found that the source of the disease was a bacteria found in raw sewage, to which humans had previously been immune because they used to be exposed to it in trace amounts over extended periods.

No! Bad! That's dirty!

DIR-TEE!

Reason can't defeat Emotion in an argument because in an Emotional Argument you just go around and around in rhetorical circles until you become Happy again and then the argument's over.

Check-mate.

Merged Permanence, the Emotional Female Void, surveyed the chess board uneasily. The Universal Maternal Visage brightened.

What about . . . ?

The Brightness vanished.

Oh. Right

Viktor Davis took another drag from his cigarette. There was a great serenity in his level gaze.

Maybe you could move your . . .

The two were silent for a time. Viktor Davis calmly smoked his cigarette. The Emotional Female Void looked up at him and flashed a friendly smile which Viktor Davis did not return. The Emotional Female Void returned to studying the situation on the board. The corners of Her mouth twisted downwards, frustration and misery etching long, hard lines in Her features. Tears started from Her eyes.

Without looking up, she asked:

What should I do?

Viktor Davis continued to smoke, drawing out the moment, increasing the tension in the air. At last he said: "*You won,*" and then he added, "*you tell me.*"

Viktor Davis, pushed back from the chessboard. He stood up and took a last drag from his cigarette. He expelled the smoke in a small series of concentric rings. He reached across the board and lightly flicked his cigarette. Swirling ashes fell like the first winter snow on his opponent's queen, catching here and there in her crown and in the moulded curves of her majestic form, settling onto the black square she occupied and the white and black squares adjacent to her.

He turned and walked towards the door.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

It was a plaintive cry of a wounded animal, a frightened child lost in the woods.

WHAT SHOULD I

Viktor Davis closed the door behind him, cutting off the piercing crescendo of the Voice which was breaking, overtaken and consumed by Emotion, which the Voice was

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

incapable of restraining, before which the Voice was as helpless as a sapling in a tornado.

Cerebus is a very weird little commodity in the context of the Female Emotional Void Age. It's too small to pay attention to and too big to ignore. It wouldn't be that big a stretch to categorize Reads as Hate Literature against women. All it would take is for one woman to be disturbed enough by Reads to file a lawsuit, or a women's group to file a class-action suit, in this Fascistic Feminist country and that would be the ball game, wouldn't it?

Does that worry you?

Not especially. They could ban the book, seize the house and all the inventory, all the artwork, and burn it. Copies of it would still be out there. As long as I can have a pad of paper and a ball-point pen in my prison cell, I'll be happier than a pig in shit. Clean and sober, three square meals a day, an exercise room to work out in. No monthly deadline. Sounds like a lot less pressure to me.

Viktor Davis grew serious.

Don't ever be afraid, he said. FDR was right. The only thing we have to fear is fear itself. I might get to the end of Cerebus and I might not. I could get hit by a bus, I could get cancer, I could lose my right hand, my eyesight, I could fall in love and get married.

Exception was unable to conceal profound astonishment.

Viktor Davis laughed. I'm not immune, you know. All of those things have happened to better men than me. If you look at the casualty figures in any creative field, the odds are pretty good that I'll die in poverty, the work itself completely forgotten. The other option,

if you're talking about house odds, is that I end up married to some tyrannical Queen of the Circus. Love is blind. It's also deaf, dumb and stupid. If what we are talking about is a very large and determined Force of Nature. You can walk as carefully as you want through a mine field; it is still a mine field. But it's also true that if you step up to the plate worrying that you're going to strike out, the odds are that you're going to strike out. Not doing a large ambitious work because you're convinced that Danger Lurks Around Every Corner, the old "I might be dead this time next year", is a waste of the Inner Radiance that found you. It's like life insurance. It's betting against yourself. It's blowing out your own flame before someone beats you to it.

Remember that you're just a custodian for It. You can be a good custodian, a so-so custodian or a bad custodian. You can make It a pile of smouldering twigs or you can make It a bonfire. The Male Light or the Female Void. I'm telling you that you have to choose. I'm telling you that if you think you can have both, you are mistaken, that you have already made your choice in that case.

Consensus and Exception merged once more. Rather, Consensus and some Exceptions merged. Other Exceptions, feeling the first icy brush of the Merged Void against them, edged slightly apart from it. As they felt the weak gravitational tug, they moved even further from it, compressing their own awareness within themselves. Several hard, gem-like flames flared into new existence.

"Shine on, You Crazy Diamond." - Pink Floyd, Wish You Were Here.

"Tangent" (2001)

- By Dave Sim -

[If] the ensuing seems unduly harsh to male and female feminists (which it will since everything besides complete and abject surrender to feminism strikes male and female feminists as unduly harsh) there is, perhaps, some small feminist consolation to be had from the fact that, with the completion of "Tangent," I intend to "have done" with the subject of gender and gender "issues" entirely: in much the same way that The Cerebus Guide to Self-Publishing constituted my "hail and farewell" to the subject of self-publishing. As with the Guide, "Tangent" represents a summing up of my conclusions about a subject which has occupied my attentions for a period of time and which I have resolved for my-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

self in my own way and to my own satisfaction (and which I am now pleased to put behind me so that I can pursue other areas of interest to me).

Pre-Tangent

Carol West resigned her position as Aardvark-Vanaheim's Administrative Assistant (a very fancy feminist name for a very plain secretarial position: mea culpa, mea maxima culpa, and I don't intend that ironically) after "inputting" a first draught of "Tangent" parts one and two. Her resignation, far from being either a surprise or a disheartening event, to me, seemed just the latest example of feminism undermining its own 30-year long campaign to be taken seriously as a societal movement by (literally) getting offended and leaving in a huff whenever it encounters any viewpoint which does not represent absolute capitulation to its own. At some point – whether the intervening period is measured in days, weeks, months, years, decades or centuries – At Some Point, feminism will, I am sure, at long last be forced to face a number of hard questions about its total lack of intellectual foundation. Carol West can get offended and leave, but the hard questions remain. My feminist readers can roll their eyes theatrically, but the hard questions remain. They can exhale noisily, but the hard questions remain. They can snort derisively, but the hard questions remain. They can, collectively, turn their backs, but the hard questions remain.

In the arena of intellectual opinion, when it comes to these hard questions, asking Dave Sim, "Why do you hate women so much?" is irrelevant when my subject is feminism's lack of sound intellectual footing. It is irrelevant whether I hate women. It is irrelevant whether I love women. It is irrelevant whether I consider women in any emotional context whatsoever, just as – when my question is directed toward feminism's lack of sound intellectual footing – it is irrelevant whether I hate ice cream, whether I love ice cream or whether I consider ice cream in any emotional context whatsoever. All That Is Relevant, when the issue at hand is my contention that feminism lacks a sound intellectual foundation, All That Is Relevant, Germane and/or Pertinent is the intellectual foundation – or lack of same – upon which feminism rests.

Walking away is not relevant. Rolling one's eyes theatrically is not relevant. Snorting derisively is not relevant.

It seems to me that after thirty years, all thinking people must be coming to realize that these reactions – far from constituting a defence of feminism – lead, inescapably, in the contrary direction: lead, inescapably, to the fact that feminism has no sound intellectual foundation: that, in fact, feminism has only its own rapidly dwindling momentum and the sheer gall,chutzpah, nerve and inherent unreasoning contrariness of its perpetrators as its foundation, as its sole line of defence, as its single raison d'être and as its solitary rationale.

Anyway, this is how I began:

Tangent 1

Having dispensed with the Hemingways (how many of you still think that Mary Hemingway – despite having murdered her husband – is a "strong, independent woman and a good role model for wives everywhere"? Show of hands. Almost all of you. Big surprise.) I now prepare for the next complete waste of my own time and energy: my promised "last word on gender" entitled "Tangent".

All males (as opposed to men) sound like social workers and/or voodoo profession wannabe's, so it came as no surprise – when the fellow turned to me and asked "Where do you think your ideas about women come from?" – and the saccharine undertone was there ("When we share our experiences with others, it helps us to get in touch with our innermost feelings and emotions").

"Where do you think your ideas about women come from?"

Two things:

Foremost, they originate from the research that I did for *Mothers & Daughters*. Not the voluminous reading of everything from nurse novels to voodoo pop (*My Mother, My Self; Our Bodies, Our Selves; Our House-pets, Our, Selves*, et al) to Women's Studies ["... and after all correlatives of the societal norm have been maximized through the intuitive, the nurturing and spiritually nutritive,

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

through the hard-won maturation of our collective emotive *a priori* dispensation-construct: regarded (herein) not as the mere imitative imposition of the aforementioned “will to power” (the now universally discredited patriarchal model) but a new model founded upon, to reiterate, the intuitive, the nurturing and spiritually nutritive, pursuant *to*, but not inextricably bound *within* the ad hoc antecedent culture and/or cultural imperative blah blah blah”]. All I got out of *that* research, I already knew: a) women want to be raped by rich, muscular, handsome doctors b) women are completely self-absorbed and, thus, see themselves in everything around them and c) feminism is no different from communism in that all of its literature is founded upon convoluted syntax, bafflegab and academic jargon which paints a false (albeit attractive) picture of an unattainable utopia which can be achieved – *easily!* – by everyone in the world simply and simultaneously (in both feminist and communist literature the “crux point” is invariable) changing their basic nature overnight. Acknowledging – (*grudgingly*) the small likelihood of so sweeping a societal change coming about on its own, “a rigorous and thorough program of (communist and feminist literature share an admiration for the euphemism) re-education may be called for.” That is, all “non-comrades, non-fellow travellers” must be subjected to unrelenting political indoctrination, sloganeering and brainwashing (“A woman’s right to choose! A woman’s right to choose!”).

(I sense that my situation with feminism is comparable to that of pre-1989 writers faced with the task of “debunking” communism: how extensive, lengthy and intricate an explanation can one pursue in explaining that two-plus-two do *not* equal five, but *in fact*, equal four without – even in one’s own view – treading well within the lunatic borders of the excruciatingly self-evident? I suspect that feminism, like communism, must be allowed to “strut and fret its hour upon the stage,” “playing out” its manifold absurdities until even the most ardent and most willfully ignorant “true believer” comes to realize – as has happened with communism – that “there is no *there*, there.”)

No. The research which most contributed to my “ideas about women” was the series of

informal interviews I conducted with mothers and daughters – with mothers about their daughters, with daughters about their mothers, with daughters about their daughters, with mothers about their mothers. It was really the first time in my adult life that I spoke to women who I found physically unattractive and the first time I spoke to women with any motive besides getting them into bed. In the case of the *attractive* women that I interviewed, it was a guarantee that I was *not* going to get them into bed – “mothers and daughters,” as subject, existing at the opposite end of the conversational spectrum from those topics which lead to sex – and (*knowing*that) for the first time in my adult life the intellectual, reasoning, “writerly” part of my mind was engaged when talking to women.

For the first while, I couldn’t figure out what was wrong.

I’m usually a “quick study” when it comes to a given subject – the “high altitude mapping” as Alan Moore called it in our “Dialogue: From Hell” a few years back. It’s really what writing is made up of. Ask the hard questions, narrow the list of possibilities and work with the resulting template. As it turns out, nothing in the feminist psyche conforms to this model. All women are feminists and all feminist evidence is anecdotal. Ask them a question and they will tell you a little story. Ask them a question to clarify what you *infer* is the *point* of the story and they will tell you another story. When they *do* attempt to draw a conclusion or a larger inference *from* an anecdote they will often ask, “Does that make any sense?” And the answer, of course is (almost invariably) no, it doesn’t make any sense. And since I wasn’t trying to get any of them into bed, I would say so (if you’re trying to get them into bed, you always say “yes, that makes perfect sense” or manufacture some sensible interpretation that has nothing to do with what they said). *Telling* them that they don’t make sense, I found, is like telling them that not only do they *not* win the trip to Hawaii, they don’t even get the Samsonite luggage. They become forlorn and uncommunicative. That was when I realized that it was impossible to engage them on an intellectual, reasoning, “writerly” level – that is, in a purely matter-of-fact fashion. I had to *act*, had

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

to *portray* myself as being happy, sympathetic, interested and cheerful in order to maintain a level of ...

... I don't know what you would call it. It wasn't communication in any meaningful sense of the term as I understand it. It was a kind of "emotional badminton." I acted happy, sympathetic, interested and cheerful and then it was *her* turn to act happy, sympathetic, interested and cheerful and then it was *my* turn, etc. She might accidentally say something interesting where I could, with sincerity, say that I found what she had just said interesting. This temporarily escalated the level of her cheerfulness but, alas, that is all that it did: whatever was being said ranking a very distant second to maintaining and escalating the level of cheerfulness. A very, *very* distant second. I realized that this is where the "henhouse cacophony" originates. If "communication" within a group of women is working properly (as women see "working properly") everyone should be talking faster and faster and faster and in a higher and higher musical range – either *portraying* themselves or *being* (the two states being deemed interchangeable in the female world) cheerful, more cheerful, "cheerfullest" – until, maximum cheerfulness having been achieved, a glass breaks or something.

That was when I realized that women are emotion-based beings. "Once a thing is seen, it can't be *unseen*." I gave a couple of more tries at relationships after that (a year-and-a-half and three-and-a-half years respectively) but it was really like solving a "brain teaser" after someone has given you the answer. You know – one of those puzzles where you are supposed to "make three triangles by connecting the dots using only seven lines" (or whatever). It can drive you insane for a month, but if you look in the back of the book, or if someone shows you how it's solved or you figure it out on your own, there is little entertainment value to be had in endlessly drawing those same seven lines to make those same three triangles. Likewise, there is little in the way of intellectual value to be derived from *revisiting* – either mentally or "in person" the simple fact (once discovered), that women are emotion-based beings and that (consequently) any female-centred or female-originated political move-

ment – more precisely, "political" "movement" – will lack sound intellectual footing. Hence, my billing of "Tangent" as "my last word on gender."

Women are emotion-based beings.

One of the spillovers from *Mothers & Daughters* into *Rick's Story* was Viktor Davis telling Rick, "Just be happy every waking minute of your life and you've got her for as long as you want her." Which was really a perverse way for Viktor Davis to put it. It's valid advice, but the "every minute of your life" was unnecessarily arduous (which Viktor knew but, in his willfully cruel way, thought he would add as a little "going away" present for Rick). It could be more appropriately phrased as: "If things aren't going right, just act cheerful and say things in a musical tone of voice and everything will be fine." Which they will, but, in my own experience, I found that that was no way to live. But even as I found that that was no way to live, I recognized there was no *other* way to live in the context. With an emotion-based being, your only choices are to narcotize her with a steady stream of cheerful, musical expression or manufacture a chaotic mixture of emotional portrayals to "wake her up" ("awake" being a purely relative term, of course, in referring to emotion-based beings). You can *try* being sensible and reasonable but all you're going to get back is an emotion-based portrayal of sense and reason having nothing to do with sense and reason. An emotion-based being just attempts to *reflect* and/or *portray* what little emotion she can discern in sense and reason ("*sombre*," "*serious*," "*earnest*," "non-musical") and attaches the portrayal to an arbitrary stream of musical vocalizations having nothing to do with the subject at hand. This invariably provokes extreme impatience in the non-emotion-based being, to whose impatient expressions the *emotion*-based being will invariably respond: "Why are you getting so *angry*?" Impatience is not a *happy* emotion, but an *identifiable* one for an emotion-based being: "I was singing your *sombre*, *serious*, *earnest*, *non-musical* song with you and now you're *angry*. Why don't you just sing a *cheerful* song instead so we can both be *happy*?" To the emotion-based being, this makes perfect sense.

(All lengthy and thorough explanations being digressional, at this point the fellow

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

asked, "Is this like that book *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*?" To his credit, he hadn't actually read the book. Neither have I. "There's always a danger with those things," I said. "I was in a bookstore and I saw the cover of the sequel, *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus, Children Are From Heaven*." The fellow nodded readily. However, as there were a number of women eavesdropping in the vicinity, I thought it worth adding for their benefit, "If a man lowers himself to a woman's level of fairy-tale metaphor – I mean, self-evidently men are *not* from Mars and women are *not* from Venus – women will invariably drag the discussion over into something comparable to *Children are From Heaven* smiling and chuckling and feeling really good about themselves." "Children are From Heaven. Now we're really getting somewhere." The fellow nodded impatiently.)

Anyway, I just found that I couldn't live that way. A woman is going to do whatever makes her cheerful at the moment and that, in my experience, is the extent of her perception of ethics. In order to maintain a relationship with an emotion-based being it is necessary to be cheerful about anything that makes her cheerful. Coupled with a "woman's right to choose" as central ethic – or, rather, "ethic" – this involves a wide and variegated spectrum of feminist actions and behaviours and opinions. At one time, I rated sex as being very, very, *very* high on my list of life's pleasures. Ultimately, for myself, the spiritual toll which was exacted by maintaining a rictus grin in the face of all feminist actions, behaviours and opinions across the full range of that spectrum made the price of sex *too* high – which, considering how highly I once rated sex as a pleasure is really saying something, I think.

[I discovered, through celibacy and the avoidance of masturbation that sexual desire is a lot like a rash. If you keep "scratching it" you make it worse and, thus, "scratching it" comes to seem like an urgent, toppermost of the poppermost, central necessity in your life. If you learn to leave your *penis* alone, I discovered, your penis will learn to leave *you* alone.]

This dovetailed with the "second source" in answering "Where do you think your ideas about women *come* from?": my own decision

to alternate periods of intentional celibacy (as opposed to "not getting laid") with periods of monogamous sexual activity and semi-monogamous sexual activity. Having gone back and forth between the two states over the course of a decade, I can state unequivocally that celibate Dave Sim sees reality more clearly than sexually-active Dave Sim (who wilfully hypnotized himself into seeing the world in a manifestly *untrue* way and persuaded himself that feminist lies were true, that many feminist lies contained elements of truth, that feminist lies were not wholly untruthful). Surrendering an accurate perception of reality for a world of fairy-tale falsehoods was part of the high price of sex, a price I was no longer prepared to pay.

I got tired of Believing Five Impossible Things Before Breakfast.

(Odd to say that one out loud for the first time.)

"For instance?" the fellow asked.

"Well, take Government-Funded Daycare," I said, "a central plank in the platform of the fairy-tale world emotion-based beings inhabit – Their belief/feeling that it is the responsibility of government to raise children. Feminists and their hollowed-out ventriloquist puppet husbands ... (...please bear with my use of that ... *admittedly* ... prejudicial phrase until I've had the chance to elaborate...) ... have universally adopted Government-Funded Daycare in principle. Not only is it fiscally *irresponsible* and an inherently unfair use of public funds (benefiting only those mothers who choose to work), it is diametrically opposed to a central tenet of any civilized society: that children are the responsibility of their parents to rear. When was the last time you even heard it described as '*rearing* children'? 'You *rear* children. You *raise* hogs.' What the feminists and their ventriloquist puppet husbands are talking about doing with Government-Funded Daycare is raising children as if they were a herd of interchangeable swine. No surprise coming from a gender which has no ethics, no scruples, no sense of right and wrong. Just hand the kids over to the voodoo profession, social workers, government bean counters and go along with whatever happens to be the Ethical Consensus du Jour. 'Raise' boys to be girls, 'raise' girls to be boys."

How?

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

"Well, I'm sure *I* don't know. I'm just Porky/Petunia's *mother*. They have *experts* who know how to 'raise' boys to be girls and 'raise' girls to be boys. I'll let *them* decide. Listen, I'd love to chat about this, but I have a meeting with a client at 9:00 and I'm going to be late as it is."

This connected quite neatly with an article I had read in that morning's *Globe & Mail* which said that some astronomical percentage of parents thought it was the responsibility of public schools to teach sexual morality.

I mean, that one just *stinks* of feminism.

"Homosexuality is just another lifestyle choice, completely normal." "Homosexuality isn't a choice, it's a genetic reality" Oh. Okay. So (leaving aside the obvious fact that those two realities contradict each other) [my own view is that *all* sexuality is a matter of choice since it is not a life-sustaining necessity: what or whom you have sex with – or whether you have sex at all – is optional. I would not be here if it weren't for sex, true, but if I *choose* never to have sex, I am *still* "*here*"], when do you want to start teaching this lifestyle choice/genetic reality in the classroom? What age? Six? Seven? Ten? Twelve? And *how* do you want to teach it? Bring in a couple of dykes and a couple of interior decorators to talk to a bunch of third graders?

"Well, I'm sure *I* don't know. I'm just Porky/Petunia's *mother*. They have *experts* on cultural diversity and alternative lifestyles now, don't they? I'll let *them* decide. Listen, I'd love to chat about this, but I have a meeting with a client at 10:30 and I'm going to be late as it is."

[This is actually "jumping the gun" a little on Tangent II's examination of the feminist-homosexualist axis, but suffice to say that their feminist-homosexualist consensus view of teaching homosexuality in the schools seems to be a) it's a very good idea and b) men are wrong. It's difficult – actually impossible – to discern any agreement beyond that point].

But, this is way too many words for our CNN "Get To The Point News" Information Age, isn't it? So, let's distil Daycare and Government-Funded Daycare into short and concise Impossible Things to Believe Before Breakfast form:

1. A mother who works a full-time job and delegates to strangers the raising of her children eight hours a day, five days a week does just as good a job as a mother who hand-rears her children full time.
2. It makes great sense for the government to pay 10 to 15,000 dollars a year to fund a daycare space for a child so its mother – who pays *perhaps* 2,000 dollars in taxes – can be a contributing member of society.

All you husbands and daycare daddies are just nodding like crazy. "Makes sense to me, Dave." "Gotta have it. Government-Funded Daycare. No way around that. Gotta have it." "A woman's right to choose! A woman's right to choose!"

For the benefit of the *rest* of my readership, I decided to compose a partial list of Impossible Things To Believe Before Breakfast (jotted down over the course of an hour while working on a *Cerebus* page – I figured a dozen or so would get my point across).

I'll just continue the numbering from our Daycare entries.

3. A woman's doctor has more of a valid claim to participate in the decision to abort a fetus than does the father of that fetus.
4. So long as a woman makes a decision after consulting with her doctor, she is incapable of making an unethical choice.

[I was going to allow the Impossible Things to stand alone and "hatch out" however they might in each individual reader's mind once they had been planted – to mix a metaphor. However, in the aftermath of Carol West's resignation, that seems unnecessarily naive, given the wilfulness with which the hard questions are ignored in our society. So, here, interposed, is my more elaborate opinion on abortion:]

The far larger question, to me, is one of "*what God therefore hath joyned together let not man put asunder*" (Matthew 19:6, Mark 10:9). (This, so far as I know, being the *only* genuinely Biblical quotation – the Synoptic Jesus again, *caveat emptor* – in the otherwise wholly and completely secular Christian wedding ceremony is a major reason that I have no objection to gay marriages. I'm reasonably certain that marriage is a completely pagan, completely female invention no more sacred as an institution than are feminism or communism. It is, after all,

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

called Matrimony and not Patrimony, isn't it? I mean, duh.) It seems to me utterly foolish to ascribe virtually *any* of our society's haphazard – *literally* “catch as catch can” – marriage unions to our Creator. In my view, an omnipotent and omniscient being simply wouldn't have that lousy a track record.

Pregnancy, it seems to me, is an altogether different matter.

Inexplicable as it is that *some* acts of coitus produce offspring while others do not (despite the best efforts of medical science to establish irrefutable “laws” of cause-and-effect) it seems to me that here, God's hand is very much in evidence and “*what God hath joyned together let not man put asunder*” – sperm and egg, fertilized egg and uterine wall – very much applicable. If abortion *is*, as the feminists insist, a matter of a woman having control over her own body, then I think a public demonstration of a woman *willing* herself to become un-pregnant or willing her fertilized egg to detach itself from her uterine wall would settle the issue once and for all. At which point I would happily go along with the secular-humanist consensus view.

But, of course, a woman no more has control over her reproductive functions – apart from abstinence – than she has over the number of hairs growing on her head or the colour of her eyes.

Thus, to me, “a woman's right to choose” constitutes little more than an imbecilic paraphrase of “free will”. That is, we are all, by the grace of God, free to choose. That is what free will is. We can choose to commit murder, we can choose to steal, we can choose to commit adultery. The underpinning of the life of the God-fearing individual is that there is a price to be paid – sometimes in this world, sometimes in the world to come, sometimes in both – for choosing incorrectly. The ritual sacrifice of babies is well-documented among the pagan peoples named in the Torah and is, irrefutably, an abomination in the eyes of God.

Is abortion in the same category?

As a global civilization, here in the first nanoseconds of the 21st century the present consensus would appear to be “yes, no and/or maybe”. Half of us believe that abortion is in no way comparable. Half of us believe that it is. To me, all that is relevant is God's opinion

and – since medical abortion evolved well after the death of God's Last Messenger and Seal of Prophets, Muhammad (peace be upon him) in 632 CE – that is unknown to us. It is unknown to me and it is unknown to you and it is unknown to Pope John Paul II, his predecessors and his successors. Likewise with God's opinion on condoms (ribbed, coloured or plain) and birth control pills.

On the Last Day when all is made plain to us, I would not be terribly surprised – from my present vantage point of self-admitted absolute ignorance – to find that abortions and birth control will be indictable offences for some and non-indictable offences for others, based on God's superior and perfect knowledge of each individual ... just as I would not be terribly surprised to find that abortion and birth control will be deemed murder, High Crimes against one's own soul and (far worse) the soul of another ... or to find that abortion and birth control are considered lesser transgressions against one's own soul: more comparable to, say, smoking than to, say, murder. Genuine faith in God, it seems to me, brings one face-to-face with the profound level of one's own ignorance about what is right and what is wrong, post-632 CE. The fact that the various church hierarchies refuse to acknowledge their *own* ignorance in no way alters my own belief that we are all ignorant in these areas. But, the bottom line, to me is a) we won't know until the Last Day and b) “a woman's right to choose” contributes nothing to the debate.

In my own sexually-active days, I found the idea of “a woman's right to choose” to be more than a little “ethically convenient”. Had any of the women I had had sex with gotten pregnant (none did, so far as I know), I could just take the secular-humanist “high road” of saying that I believed in “a woman's right to choose” thus (theoretically anyway) allowing her to assume whatever “karmic debt” or “spiritual burden” results from having an abortion while, on my own part, “escaping” with just the financial burden of a few hundred dollars for the cost of the operation. Even in my secular-humanist days it seemed just a little too, as I say, “ethically convenient” considering what was actually involved: the irresponsible *initiation* of a human life followed by the equally irresponsible (to me) *eradicating* of that human life. Two

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

wrongs don't make a right, at the point of greatest reduction. It seemed to me a double ethical pitfall and, no, I don't blame women for that. Women have as natural an affinity for medical science as they had for its progenitor, magic. If there is something that women can make use of that, in their view, will provide them with immediate tactical gratification or relief from anxiety, they will make use of it and then welcome any voodoo-professional feminist ideology band-aid assistance in rationalizing away their (I think, natural) feelings of guilt – so long as the assistance/rationalizing comes “after the fact”. It is, in my view, part of a man's ethical obligation to his own soul and to his Creator to endeavour to be (or become) sufficiently wary of this female trait and for men to not allow their penises to lead them down specific unethical paths where a man's own fate in this world and possibly the next becomes “bound up” with those disposed (*predisposed?*) to believe in these sorts of “ethical conveniences”. In saying that, I no more believe that women are to blame in *any* way for those occasions when I allowed my own penis to lead me down specific unethical paths than, as an example, cigarettes are to blame for the fact that, a year and a half after quitting smoking, I still want to smoke a cigarette. “It was *my* choice to smoke my first cigarette at the age of eleven and it was *my* choice to smoke every cigarette I smoked thereafter.

We now return you to your regularly-scheduled list of Impossible Things to Believe Before Breakfast, already in progress:]

5. A car with two steering wheels, two gas pedals and two brakes drives more efficiently than a car with one steering wheel, one gas pedal and one brake which is why marriage should always be an equal partnership.
6. It is absolutely necessary for women to be allowed to join or participate fully in any gathering place for men, just as it is absolutely necessary that there be “women only” environments from which men are excluded.
7. Because it involves taking jobs away *from* men and giving them *to* women, affirmative action makes for a fairer and more just society.
8. It is important to have lower physical standards for women firepersons and women policepersons so that, one day, half of all firepersons and policepersons will be women, thus more effectively protecting the safety of the public.
9. Affirmative action at colleges and universities needs to be maintained now that more women than men are being enrolled, in order to keep from giving men an unfair advantage academically.
10. Having ensured that there is no environment for men where women don't belong (see no.6) it is important to have zero tolerance of any expression or action which any woman might regard as sexist to ensure greater freedom for everyone.
11. Only in a society which maintains a level of 95% of alimony and child support being paid *by* men *to* women can men and women be considered as equals.
12. An airline stewardess who earned \$20,000 a year at the time that she married a baseball player earning \$6 million a year is entitled, in the event of a divorce, to \$3 million for each year of the marriage and probably more.
13. A man's opinions on how to rear and/or raise a child are invalid because he is not the child's mother. However, his financial obligation is greater because no woman gets pregnant by herself.
14. Disagreeing with any of these statements makes you anti-woman and/or a misogynist.

So, how did you do, fellas? Don't worry if there were a few statements there that you disagreed with. Just use a few of these handy feminist obfuscations, like: “Well, of course, these issues are very, very complicated,” Or “While I see what Dave is saying, I have to say that I agree more than I disagree,” Or “Of course, these issues are all ‘works-in-progress’. I'd like to hear a few more opinions before I make up my mind,” Or “There might be *some* inequality but compared to the centuries of women being oppressed it seems a small price to pay temporarily until it all gets worked out.” If you notice that *none* of these obfuscations has *anything* to do with *any* of the statements just keep repeating “A woman's right to choose! A woman's right to choose! A woman's right to choose!” until you stop thinking and/or start to feel better.

Although I have given the husbands a hard time here, I am not without sympathy, having been one myself once. Husbands, it seems to me, are caught between the Rock of Feminism and the Hard Place of their own marriages: that is, capitulate or leave. “Deadbeat Dads,” to me, is a skewed feminist perception. It is not that men are *deserting* their families in many cases, so much as it is that

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

they are being *driven* from their families by the pressure to Believe Five Impossible Things Before Breakfast, to capitulate, that is, to Feminist Ideology, to admit to the Orwellian imperative to believe that Feminist Lies are the Truth and that Masculine Truths are Lies. Reason can't win in an argument with Emotion. Reason can capitulate to Emotion or Reason can leave. In either case Emotion, being without any sound intellectual foundation, will always find itself fully justified in its every action.

For feminists, for wives, for women, for Emotion-based beings, it is a win/win/win/win situation. Either her husband a) capitulates to her views and, thus, places himself and his assets under her jurisdiction or b) *portrays himself to her* as having capitulated to her views and, thus, places himself and his assets under her jurisdiction or c) *removes himself* from her jurisdiction and surrenders half of his assets to her voluntarily or d) removes himself from her jurisdiction and is forced to surrender half of his assets to her by the courts (Did you hear about the new Divorced Barbie? She comes with half of Ken's stuff).

It is ridiculous to discuss equality between the genders as anything but a feminist hallucination until women agree to surrender their "right" to alimony. Of course women will never surrender alimony because they are not, contrary to their very vocal protestations, equal to men. A percentage of the female population is capable of providing, for themselves, the basic necessities of life. But it is a *small percentage*, indeed, when compared with the female population which relies on the largesse of boyfriends, husbands, ex-husbands, fathers and/or the government...

[These hidden, obfuscated transactions – the husband who finances the start-up of the wife's boutique business, the fat alimony settlement which serves the same purpose, the father who co-signs his daughter's car loan or mortgage, who pays all or part of the down-payment – compel self-deluding women to believe that they are self-reliant feminists]

... and of that *small percentage* a *still smaller percentage* of the female population is capable of generating surplus wealth – that is, creating employment, creating excess capital which provides not only

for *themselves* but for others. That *still smaller percentage* exists in numbers sufficient only to make possible banner headlines and full colour photo-spreads of anecdotal success stories in *Cosmo* and *People* magazines: anecdotal success stories which are evasive of a central reality: that for every much-celebrated, much-heralded female success story in a given profession, discipline, art or business, there are *hundreds* – if not *thousands* – of male success stories in that same profession, discipline, art or business which are unheralded and uncelebrated: which are "merely" the fiscal foundation of our society and the source of our society's – and most feminists' – material wealth.

If this is false, then women are self-sustaining. If women are self-sustaining, then alimony is unnecessary and must be eliminated.

If this is true, then equality between the genders is an hallucination, a cul de sac of delusional societal "thinking".

Women are the chauvinists, not men. Nicholas Chauvin was a devoted soldier and overzealous supporter of Napoleon Bonaparte and all things French. Chauvinism is defined as "*Unreasoning* (italics mine) attachment to one's race, group, etc." To celebrate, herald and champion *one* woman publicly for doing what *hundreds* and *thousands* of men are doing in *obscurity* is chauvinism: *unreasoning* attachment to female achievement out of proportion to its contribution to society, just as Chauvin's devotion to Napoleon and all things French was drastically out of proportion to the limited importance of Napoleon, the limited importance of the French.

Tangent II

In the second of my five "Tangents," I'd like to address what I see as the misapprehensions of those strangest of political bedfellows, the feminist-homosexualist axis.

I think it was a combination of emotional empathy for societal underdogs and short-sighted tactical blundering on the part of feminists which impelled them to champion the cause of homosexuals in tandem with their own. I think that homosexuals figure – as any thoroughly marginalized socio-political wallflower would have "Just say

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

'yes' to anyone who can get us out on the dance floor, girls."

If it was scarcely a match made in heaven, the two constituencies were, at least, "well met": with a shared unwillingness to perceive any reality larger than their own anecdotal prejudices, a shared tendency to deify emotions and feelings as the totems most central to their respective tribal groupings and a preternatural ability to simply ignore any view or opinion which did not reinforce those prejudices and which did not kowtow to those totems.

A certain amount of blame for the unholy feminist-homosexualist axis (my gut instinct informs me) fairly attaches itself to Gore Vidal and his – as I discussed earlier – pioneering view that everyone is bisexual by nature and that what is perceived to be "homosexuality" or "heterosexuality" are the "luck of the draw" results of what behaviourists (good voodoo professionals all) define as "imprinting". That is (now, promise you won't laugh), that the natural instinct which impels a newly-hatched duckling to identify the first large, moving shape it sees as "mother" is the same instinct which leads us to our initial sexual experiences and, thus, leads us to believe that we are "homosexualists" or "heterosexualists".

There, but for the grace of Barbi Benton's 1969 *Playboy* pictorial, go I (as it were).

Now, whether this notion of "interchangability as norm" originated with the homosexualists, the feminists or (as I say) Gore Vidal, it found in the 1960s and 70s nutrient-rich soil in which to further itself as a Large Societal Misapprehension. But, whereas Mr. Vidal (I believe) fashioned said notion as a means of "tactical seduction" (pretty, weak-minded young men found "fence-sitting" could be persuaded in contradiction of their own best and most natural masculine instincts – that it is more natural to "swing both ways") ("just this once" being, I would suppose, rather more than adequately suited to Mr. Vidal's presumably ... eclectic ... purposes): I believe that the "interchangeability underpinning" was appropriated by the "ladies" for "doings" that were to prove a good deal "darker" in the long-term. That is, it was appropriated for the advancement of the idiosyncratic feminist view that the *genders* are interchangeable and that all

distinctions between male and female are imposed by an evil patriarchal society which must be overthrown. Of course, like any counter-conspiracy of such magnitude, once you get started there is always something else that needs doing. You begin with the subversion of language, the eradication of gender-specific nouns and one thing just leads to another. Counter-indoctrination – the feminist/communist-style program of re-education/brainwashing – must needs assert itself in the very earliest collectivist environments: *kindergarten* is too late if the Workers' – er – Feminist Paradise on Earth is to be achieved in our lifetime. The feminists began to "ramp up" nursery school, pre-nursery school and pre-pre-nursery school. The entertainment field and the arts community needed to be co-opted, designers of androgynous fashions pressed into service.

[Long accustomed to blaming the Patriarchal boogeyman for *imposing* near-anorexic, near-skeletal standards of "beauty" and "fashion" upon their naturally curvaceous selves, I think the "ladies" could more fairly indict their own unholy alliance with the homosexualists and the (all exceptions duly noted) predominantly gay fashion designers. Said gay fashion designers, in their turn, are more than entitled to use the Nuremberg defence that they "were just following orders" in developing and sustaining an androgynous "look" along the pirated Vidalian political line: if we are all bisexualists by nature then, presumably, whatever "look" arouses gay fashion designers in pretty young *males* should (all bisexual realities being equal) be the same "look" which arouses men when they look at pretty young *women*. Such is not the case (if the men I know are anything to go by) but there is a certain guilty pleasure to be derived in watching women starving themselves to death in the name of their own misbegotten absolutist ideology.]

If the early push to equip all men with purses was a failure ("Men wear purses in *Europe*," one feminist interjected, a hint of desperation in her tone, when I mentioned the subject socially), still virtually all of us in my generation, men and women, were – and are – wearing jeans of one description or another. Such major victories, however, are Pyrrhic ashes in the mouths of those for whom ideol-

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

ogy is an absolute. If “gender interchangeability” is the hypothesis then there can be no rest until all societal fashions resemble those of the various *Star Trek* pyjamas-as-street-wear incarnations: interchangeability must be *total*.

One of the earliest bastions to fall (and which is still in the hands of the People's Revolutionary Government of Gender Interchangeability) was Academe. I believe that Gore Vidal alluded to the conquest – however obliquely – in the closing paragraphs of his essay “Edmund Wilson: This Critic and This Gin and These Shoes” (*New York Review of Books*, September 25, 1980):

But Wilson was quite aware that “things” in themselves are not enough. Professor Edel quotes from Wilson's Princeton lecture: “no matter how thoroughly and searchingly we may have scrutinized works of literature from the historical and biographical point of view ... we must be able to tell the good from the bad, the first-rate from the second-rate. We shall not otherwise write literary criticism at all.”

We do not, of course, write literary criticism at all now. Academe has won the battle in which Wilson fought so fiercely on the other side. Ambitious English teachers (sic!) now invent systems that have nothing to do with literature or life but everything to do with those games that must be played in order for them to rise in the academic bureaucracy. Their works are empty indeed. But then, their works are not meant to be full. They are to be taught, not read. The long dialogue has broken down. Fortunately, as Flaubert pointed out, the worst thing about the present is the future. One day there will be no ... But I have been asked not to give the game away. Meanwhile, I shall drop a single hint: Only construct! (emphasis mine)

Reading between the lines, I think, in one sense or another, after they had misappropriated his “interchangeability thesis,” representatives of the mad little band of checkers-playing Ivy League tacticianettes (the “type” perhaps best exemplified by Hilary Rodham Antoinette) took it upon themselves to – somewhat gleefully, I'm sure – keep Mr. Vidal abreast of their “progress” in getting everything “all mixed up” along what they perceived – in their own addle-pated female way – to be the lines of his own ideology of interchangeability.

What heady days those must have been! Nothing but patriarchal gravestones as far as the eye could see, as easily tipped over as a

sleeping cow! No feminist track record to defend! It tastes good! Other women are doing it! Who cares? (A woman's right to choose! A woman's right to choose! A woman's right to choose!)

“Only construct!”

Sincere advice or sabotage through reverse psychology? I mean, it's both. So meticulous a student of human history, so scrupulous a scholar of historical times and tides as Gore Vidal would recognize that – if the feminist inversion of society was to have the merest chance of success – it would need to be *grafted onto* the existing body politic and nurtured *in tandem* with it. With a great deal of care and a little bit of luck (well, okay, a *lot* of luck), the new growth would prove more suited to its environment than that which it was seeking to replace and the “old growth” would expire of its own obsolescent-by-contrast nature and accord. There are any number of examples of this in the supplanting of one form of civilisation by a successor civilisation.

Of course it was probably a matter of months rather than years after Vidal's sage advice to “Only construct!” that Feminism hobbled itself and its chance of success with a severe outbreak of deconstructionism – the political equivalent of a raging yeast infection that, left unchecked, shows every sign of becoming a terminal cancer. Attempts at remission by defining Deconstructionism as “Politically Correct” only awakened the intelligentsia to the disturbing parallels between feminism and communism, the shared jargon, the wilful disinclination to shape and re-shape an hypothesis out of the best available evidence, but to always – perversely – manufacture and pick-and-choose evidence purely on the basis of its ability to *support* a given hypothesis (the underlying motive, as an example, compelling women to starve themselves to death rather than accept the fact that their body type is different from that of their homosexualist “allies”).

Did Vidal count on the fact that women can always be relied upon to do the opposite of what they are advised to do by a man? Was his own horror at the prospect of the Hilary Rodham Plantagenets of this world actually taking control the underlying motive in his giving them such an invaluable, irrefutable, best course of action distilled down to two

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

words (and an exclamation point!), knowing that they would ignore him and, thus, undo their own totalitarian ambitions through their own fundamental "contrariness?"

I wonder.

I have less frequently run afoul of homosexualist disapprobation than I have that of feminists but on one notable occasion, when I had written that I was "sickened" by the thought of male homosexual acts, I received a letter from a very famous and very talented gay graphic novelist (so far as I know there is only *one* gay graphic novelist so the first two guesses don't count) asking me something along the lines of "how dare (I) find what he and his lover do together sickening?"

This is what I mean by the anecdotal prejudices of the feminist-homosexualist axis, their frame of reference narrowed to the limits of their own idiosyncratic and tiny societal reality.

It was not a matter that I had consciously chosen at some point to sit down and persuade myself, "You know, I really must develop within myself a profound physical aversion to what famous-talented-gay-graphic-novelist and his boyfriend do in bed with each other." The aversion *was* there, *is* there, as it is (so far as I know) with most, if not all, heterosexual men having nothing *whatsoever* to do with famous-talented-gay-graphic-novelist or his boyfriend as human beings. Had I been inclined to respond, I could very easily have said, "How dare you presume to dictate to another person what *is* or *is not* an appropriate, natural physical reaction *within* that person?"

It seems to me that it is typical of the "ists" – communists, feminists and homosexualists – that they genuinely see "re-education" as viable and not a violation, tolerant and not totalitarian and that they have always failed to see – whether it is in their communist or feminist-homosexualist incarnation – that "politically correct" is an oxymoron. It is *only* the totalitarian who sees the goal of politics to be the determination of the One Right Way to Think and it is only the totalitarian who fails to recognize that politics is the vital give-and-take, parry-and-thrust – the *on-going* give-and-take and parry-and-thrust – implied by the existence of contending viewpoints. As an example, *I firmly be-*

lieve that feminism is a misguided attempt to raise women above their place, which *I firmly believe* is secondary to that of men. *I firmly believe* that homosexuality – not homosexualists themselves – belongs at the margins of society and behind closed doors. *I firmly believe* that it must be tolerated just as I firmly believe it should not be publicly celebrated. "In your face" celebrated, I mean.

But I do not *envision* a world – nor would I *endorse* a world – where the feminist and the homosexualist needed to be "re-educated" or "have their consciousness raised" (or whatever feminist-homosexualist euphemism you prefer for brainwashing, indoctrination and sloganeering) so as to compel them to make their beliefs conform to my beliefs. Nor do I become indignant when my beliefs are challenged. I am more than willing to sharpen and clarify distinctions between my own views and the views of others (as I am doing at considerable length here) and I am always more than content to "agree to disagree," but I confess that it does trouble me a great deal when political *arrivistes* like the homosexualists and the feminists think that what engenders a natural visceral reaction in another human being should – or even *could* – be modified to suit *their* prejudices as to what that reaction in *their* view – should be.

I like to avoid "Nazi analogies" (totalitarian seems preferable to me as a less pejorative term), but when someone appears to imply that *my* reactions, *my* visceral reactions, *my* own thoughts, *my* own interior repercussive awarenesses need to be managed or modified or obliterated, I do, I confess, hear the heavy tread of the jackboot in the back stairwell of my psyche.

Where I most particularly take issue with the feminist-homosexualist axis is with what I see as their monomaniacal haste to blur all distinctions between "tolerance" and "celebration" of "alternative" lifestyles. While feminists, in my experience, tend to view themselves as being very much unshockable "been there, done that" veterans of jaded sexual world-weariness, I beg to differ. When placed alongside the multiplicity of hues which make up the full spectrum of sexual "orientations," the "rainbow" of your average feminists' sexual experiences will (I can

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

practically guarantee) prove positively monochromatic by contrast.

As a civilized person, I am more than willing to tolerate the algolagnist in his or her proper place at the margins of society and behind closed doors. An Algolagnist Pride Parade is another thing entirely.

I am not sure how widespread irrimation and self-irrimation are but I am sure that its devotees are very fond of it. However, my tolerance of their preference does not extend to public demonstrations of it in the food court of my local shopping mall and, no, I do not consider my intransigence on the subject to originate from either bigotry or intolerance.

Purely on an aesthetic level and with a wincing eye on the rapidly aging Baby Boom population, I think the place for gerontophilia is *very* much "out of sight" and *very* much "out of mind".

Scopophilia is, I rather suppose, more universal than not, both in its legal and illegal forms. To the extent that (in the former instance) it has a nearly insatiable need for volunteers on both sides of the equation, I do not think that – in a civilized world – handing out application forms on street corners or soliciting by telephone would be any great improvement on its present place in society.

[If] my argument here seems insufficient, then let me as quickly and discretely as possible (if discretion is even *possible* under the circumstances) raise the spectre of pre-mortem consent relative to necrophilia: undoubtedly the vilest imaginable form of "estate planning," a genuine test of libertarian absolutism ...

... and just one of the many malignant vistas which open before the eyes of the strategically-minded when the tactically-limited begin to advocate and to practice the public *celebration* – rather than the *tolerance* – of "alternative" lifestyles and cultural "diversity".

The very adjective, "alternative," and the very noun, "diversity," are both dangerously open-ended, pregnant with hidden significance and subject to very broad and disastrous future extrapolations that the tactically-limited feminist-homosexualist axis chooses, persistently, to ignore.

A case presently before the Supreme Court of Canada seems relevant, concerned as it is

with whether or not possession of child pornography is a crime. Doubtless much taxpayer money will be expended as the Justices wrestle their way through to the conclusion that – while possession of *photographs* or *filmic records* (8 mm., videotape) of *actual* children in states of undress acting or posing in sexual situations with each other or with adults constitutes evidence of the commission of a crime (corruption of the morals of a minor) and that, consequently, said *photographs* and *filmic records* are disqualified as private property – the same cannot be said of *drawings* or *stories* about entirely *fictitious* children with other *fictitious* children and/or *fictitious* adults.

Repulsive? To be sure. No question about it.

But I think that a close examination of the laws governing the civilized world in our present day will show that *any* attempt to ban *any* kind of creative work ultimately and absolutely fails because our civilized laws dating back to 1066 require that there be a demonstrable danger of *physical* harm before the law can take my action. Certainly, the near universal repulsion that heterosexual men experience in considering the existence of male homosexual pornography has done little to stem the tide of public displays and celebrations of work that would have been universally deemed – even a mere fifty years ago – as depraved: many of Robert Mapplethorpe's more explicit photographs as an example. Feminists relish heterosexual male discomfiture in these situations. They simply revel in it. But, I suspect their empathic emotions are going to take an awful beating when efforts to suppress *imagination-based* child pornography ultimately fail on the same basis which permits the dissemination and possession of homosexual pornography. (*The feminist-led Supreme Court handed down its ruling in January of this year while I was doing corrections on "Tangent." If anyone is interested in reading my opinion of that ruling, write in. I think the Justices made several fundamental errors that will come back to bite them on their collective feminist asses.*)

The point missed by the feminists, I think, is that the slope between *tolerance* and *celebration* is a slippery one, indeed. If there exists a clearly demarcated line – which can be *legally drawn* – between

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

allowing public celebrations of those sexual orientations of which feminists *approve* and *disallowing* public celebrations of those sexual orientations of which feminists *disapprove*, I would certainly be eager to read it in iron-clad and unassailable legalese. But I am reasonably certain that that line does not exist and can't possibly be made to exist despite the frantic efforts that feminists will, I am sure, bring – much too little, much too late – to the proceedings when the time does come.

Allowing Gay Pride Parades is the “thin end of the wedge” and I think myself safe in saying that creeping incrementalism is the inevitable result of the – however well-intentioned – blundering of short-sighted “logic of the next step” tacticians and tacticianettes.

This danger posed by creeping incrementalism is, so far as I can see, the rationale behind the sensible (and, I daresay, *masculine*) solution of “Don't ask, don't tell,” the Clinton Administration's policy on gays in the U.S. military, much belittled (no big surprise) by the feminist-homosexualist axis.

As it becomes clear that there are any number of behaviours going on behind closed doors that any number of people find or *would* find personally abhorrent, it seems only sensible to restore privacy and confidentiality to sexual matters. Which, of course, matters of sexuality already *had* until feminists and the voodoo profession (“let it all hang out”) got hold of it. Although virtually *all* feminists are notoriously curious about other people's private lives, notoriously inclined to *discuss* private matters with others and notoriously inclined to import this singularly female vice into the workplace (into which the unfairer sex have arrived *en masse* in the last thirty years), gossip-mongering, in my view, serves no good purpose. I'm not sure how one would argue against the proposition that society will proceed quite nicely and with a minimum amount of friction and abrasion if we all (*All*) remain wholly and completely unaware of the exact percentages of the population who participate in sexual activity A or sexual activity B and which of our friends and acquaintances do likewise.

Put another way, if we were to discover irrefutable evidence that a hitherto undetected majority of the population shares in the deviant sexual behaviour Ernest Hemingway confessed to enjoying with his pet cat, Boise, I fail to see any material benefit for society in having those individuals, collectively, make themselves known to us (“We're Here! We're Bestialists! And We're Not Going Away!”) or what good might result from a Bestialists Pride Parade. I don't believe I – or anyone else – needs to have our Bestiality Consciousness Raised and I don't believe that either a Government- or Privately-Funded Study on Bestiality is worthwhile in any way.

In our society, whether we are consciously aware of it or not, if we have a *name* for “it”, then we *tolerate* “it”, whatever “it” is: at the margins of society and behind closed doors.

It seems to me that the next logical step is for everyone to agree not to talk about their own little precious “it” unless they are reasonably certain that they are in the company of like-minded devotees.

[While I was finishing “Tangent II,” Comics Journal 228 arrived in the mail with a review by a Miss or Mrs. Ruthie Penmark entitled “Dori Seda: Champagne Pissing Dog Fucker or First Great Woman Artist?” which begins, “I do not fuck my dog.”]

No further questions, your honour.]

Although I firmly believe, for the reasons stated, that the place for homosexuality – again homosexuality, not those who practice it – is at the margins of society and behind closed doors, I do not believe that homosexuality is necessarily a sin.

According to Luke's Gospel (17:21) when Jesus was asked by the Pharisees “when the kingdom of God should come,” Jesus is quoted as saying in reply,

I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed: the one shall be taken and the other shall be left. (17:34)

Two women shall be grinding together: the one shall be taken and the other left. (17:35)

I think it stretches credulity to the breaking point to suggest that there might be some other reason for two men to be in a bed. Women, sure. Just a sleep-over. Women are like that.

But men?

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

I don't think so.

Juxtaposed with the "two women ... grinding together" ...

Whichever of the disciples it was (they were all, presumably, nice orthodox Jewish boys) who recounted Jesus' reply to Luke, I would doubt that *he* or *they* knew what the reply *meant*, but I would assume that Luke – a Greek physician – knew *exactly* what the reply meant.

These two verses are followed, in the Authorized Version of the Bible, by 17:36:

Two men shall be in the field: the one shall be taken and the other left...

[Which], I suspect, was added by a later hand (whose owner also knew exactly what the reply meant and thought that what the reply meant ought to be *changed*). The marginal note in my King James 1611 facsimile rather dryly remarks:

This 36th verse is wanting in the most of the Greek copies.

"No doubt," I remember thinking to myself.

Aside from my ambivalence about the Synoptic Jesus which I have voiced elsewhere, it seems to me an open question (whose answer, like the answers to so many questions, is known only to God) as to what these two verses mean, *specifically*: whether they refer to a *specific* male homosexual and a *specific* lesbian who will be saved on the Last Day (too *literal* an interpretation in my view), whether *half* of all male homosexuals and *half* of all lesbians will be saved on the Last Day (*less* literal, but perhaps still *too* literal an interpretation) or if it means, in the more general sense, that according to the Jesus of Luke's Gospel, homosexuality *per se* doesn't automatically disqualify a soul from being saved and that homosexuality exists somewhere on the "sin spectrum" between murder and (let's say) bad hygiene – at a position closer to the latter than the former.

Or (perhaps) at the very least, closer to bad hygiene than murder than the entrenched custodians of the Law of Moses, the Scribes and the Pharisees, would have held in the 1st century of the Common Era.

Tangent III

(Leaving aside those males who, in the words of a cartoonist friend of mine, "aren't women trapped inside men's bodies – they're just *crazy* ...")

No one *wants* to be a woman.

If, prior to our life on this earth, we were presented with the option of being male or female, a short description of the functions of the *male* versus the *female* genitalia (with emphasis on menstruation, menstrual cramps, PMS, labour pains, yeast infections, et al) would most certainly result in so vast a number of us choosing the male "equipment" (what, is this a *trick* question?) that it is difficult, if not impossible, to envision any woman being born into this world at all.

To me, it seems less a case of *penis envy* (Sigmund Freud having lived in altogether too chivalrous a time period for such "plain talk" as I offer here) than it is one of *vagina abhorrence* from the standpoint of the "would-be tenant" in contemplating a role as "owner-proprietor". Alas, for reasons known only to our Creator, (almost exactly) half of us come out on the losing end of the coin toss. If things seem pretty "even steven" (leaving aside the fact that a penis, self-evidently, constitutes an anatomical "presence" and a vagina, self-evidently, an anatomical "absence") over the course of the first ten or eleven years in the life of a boy and a girl there does, alas, "come the day ..."

It would take a very hard-hearted individual, indeed (someone like myself, for instance) to find anything *amusing* in the level of Mortification at the Sheer Cosmic Unfairness of It All with which a young girl must greet the news that every twenty-eight days or so for decades-upon-decades stretching as far into the future as a ten- or eleven-year-old can possibly conceive – that a "little friend will be coming to visit". A "little friend" who (it seems) will be just as catastrophic and humiliating a mess as the one who has (just now) paid a first most unwelcome social call.

No one *wants* to be a woman.

Taxing the limits of my own not-inconsiderable imagination, I have no doubt that had I a "little friend" who paid me such "visits" – in a desperate attempt to cling to what remained of my sanity in the aftershock of the full extent of the horrible news "sinking in," I am certain that I would very quickly

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

set about the business of manufacturing a fairy-tale world for myself in which I was – in all other regards – indistinguishable from a gender which does not...

... leak?

No one *wants* to be a woman.

But, to me – unless you have been forced, by virtue of being a husband (caught between the Rock of Feminism and the Hard Place of your marriage), to hollow yourself out and Believe any number of Impossible Things Before Breakfast – the fact that no one wants to be a woman in no way validates entrenching the misapprehension (either in law or in societal custom) that men and women are interchangeable. To do so, it seems to me, is to once again march in lockstep with the communist model of picking and choosing evidence for its ability to support a given hypothesis rather than framing an hypothesis from the best available evidence.

To me, the best available evidence in terms of gender, is that – in the two-gender human “race” between man and woman and their (respectively) “present” and “absent” genitalia, with the arrival of the “little friend” in the feminine camp and with no analogous “little friend” arriving in the masculine camp – men take the gold medal and women, alas, take the silver. It seems to me that women have the option of saying “we are the losers” or they can say, “we win the silver medal.” The glass is half-full or the glass is half-empty.

But – whichever assessment seems to best reflect womankind's view of its unchangeable circumstance – gender interchangeability (looking as objectively as I can at the best available evidence) amounts to biological “social-climbing” on the part of women, just as the attempt to make homosexuality and heterosexuality interchangeable amounts to societal “social-climbing” on the part of homosexuals.

The urge deep within the female breast towards interchangeability, towards “crowding the centre,” is not limited to striving to make her gender interchangeable with the masculine gender, homosexuals interchangeable with heterosexuals. The idiosyncratic female view that “everything is basically the same as everything else,” that distinctions should not/do not and do not/should not exist anywhere, that “discrimination” is solely a pejorative (as Frank Miller adroitly pointed

out at one time, when he orders steak instead of hamburger in a restaurant he is committing an act of discrimination) also finds expression in their belief/feeling that children are (more or less) interchangeable with adults and that they should be treated as such: that the imposition of any kind of discipline on a child by its father is simply patriarchal tyranny, an abuse of power which can lead only to the child experiencing lifelong voodoo profession trauma. Children, like adults, have inalienable human rights (goes the screw-loose approximation of female “reasoning”) and must, therefore, be allowed full license to pursue – with the imposition of as few external limitations as possible – what children perceive to be their own best interests.

The end product of this “reasoning” is on display in the food court of any shopping mall in the soon-to-be-completely-uncivilized world on any given Saturday afternoon.

New Impossible Thing to Believe Before Breakfast:

15. Children must be allowed to raise themselves and determine for themselves what does and does not constitute ethical, responsible behaviour.

What is at issue, it seems to me, is the dichotomy which exists between the masculine and feminine interpretations of “out of the mouths of babes ...”

To a man, this aphorism implies that “although children are unshaped and incomplete beings until they reach the age of their majority, it is an interesting naturally-occurring phenomenon that – apropos nothing and even in the earliest stages of verbal communication – a child will, on rare occasions, voice an observation which, in defiance of all rules of logic, is actually germane and relevant to an adjacent conversation taking place on a much higher plane of sentient communication.”

The feminine interpretation tends more in the direction of “... because children are, indeed, from Heaven and are pure and untainted and good and decent and true in all regards, full of pure love and joy and compassion and innocence, their utterances, likewise, are pure and untainted and good and decent and true in all regards and the sooner we can all set our hearts on a quest to find the purest and least minted and most decent six-year-old in the world and appoint him/her

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

leader of the civilized world and do whatever he/she tells us to do without question, the sooner we will arrive at the utopia which is always just there over the rainbow.”

Put another way, I think the Prophet Isaiah's well-known prognostication, “*And a child shall lead them ...*” is one to warm the hearts of dim-bulb women everywhere and to chill the soul of every God-fearing man. It also seems to me that, with the feminist takeover of Academe and the media and feminist infiltration of the world's governing councils, we are probably a number of steps further along that particular “yellow-brick road” as well – and probably a good deal further along than we were in Isaiah's 8th century BCE.

Being a firm believer that statistics can be manipulated to support any argument, I tend to avoid them – except in those instances where the margin is so great as to imply (even with the greatest allowance for statistical error) that “something ain't kosher in Milwaukee” (the “95% of alimony and child support being paid *by men to women*,” being a good example).

When it comes to the problems posed by feminists endeavouring to “crowd the centre” by attempting to make children interchangeable with adults, I offer the statistic that one of the very few categories of crime which is increasing, rather than decreasing, in our society is that of Youth Crime, which is reportedly up a whopping 35% over the period 1990-1999.

I think myself safe in saying that this is a direct result of the implementation in our society of the feminist view that anything is better than having a father rear his child in the traditional way that worked for centuries upon centuries (mother, with her idiosyncratic notions of love *über alles*, in charge of daily, minute-by-minute custodial care and – “Wait 'til your father gets home” – fathers in charge of the setting of boundaries and the imposition of discipline and “course corrections” when an attempt is made to breach those boundaries). To the feminist, *anyone* is preferable to the father being in charge of a child's upbringing: social workers, daycare supervisors, girlfriends, homosexuals, how-to books, Oprah Winfrey, the voodoo profession, security guards at the mall, teachers – even the child *itself* is more readily trusted than not-so-dear old Dad.

In my view, women want too much to be loved unreservedly for them to be entrusted with “setting a course” for a child's development. Coupled with their misbegotten female notion that the source of their *own* unhappiness has always been “not being allowed to do exactly *what* they want exactly *when* they want”, they strive to create happiness in their children by letting their *children* do exactly what *they* want exactly when *they* want. A recipe for disaster, of course, but then men, with their long experience with the unfairer sex, could tell them that you can't have both. If a father or a boyfriend or a husband lets his wife and/or girlfriend do *whatever* she wants *whenever* she wants, what he will get from her – far from unreserved love – will be wilful condescension coupled with varying degrees of contempt. She will blame *him* that absolute freedom does not result in absolute happiness. And likewise do children. With no masculine discipline imposed upon them, no boundaries to be observed which can't be transgressed simply by wilfully doing so – or by playing mother's “heart on her sleeve” emotions like a concert violin – the result is never absolute happiness but, rather, a state more closely resembling absolute misery and the mother (as the source of that misery) and the father (as duplicitous abdicator of his own authority) being treated with the aforementioned wilful condescension and varying degrees of contempt.

Ideology being an absolute in the feminist world, this causes yet another instance of selecting evidence to support the given hypothesis, another Impossible Thing to Believe Before Breakfast:

16. When one is loved unreservedly, one is treated with wilful condescension and varying degrees of contempt.

“Aren't *men* to blame for any of this?”

Well, yes. I think it would be impossible to underestimate the degree to which men are fully culpable for the rise in Youth Crime, specifically through allowing feminists and the voodoo profession to persuade us that discipline – both physical and verbal – are “old hat” and part of a discredited “patriarchal model”: that discipline, in any form, is synonymous with abuse. To me, taking it as a given that reason cannot prevail in any argument with emotion, there must come a point –

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

with women *and* children – where verbal discipline has to be asserted, and if *verbal* discipline proves insufficient, that *physical* discipline be introduced. Women and children have soft, cushy buttocks which are, nonetheless, shot through with reasonably sensitive nerve endings.

I believe that those buttocks are there for a very specific purpose intended by their Creator.

There is no good reason that a man should *not* listen to misguided, fairy-tale vocalizations and unsound, emotion-based twaddle-and-nonsense for however long it amuses or interests him to do so or for however long seems to him politic and/or chivalrous (standards will vary).

However.

When the point *does* arrive when the amusement value has exhausted itself or good manners and chivalry have been stretched to their limit, “That’s *enough*,” spoken firmly, distinctly and above a conversational tone – with women *and* children – should be sufficient. If it proves *insufficient*, measured blows to the buttocks – “measured,” to me, meaning blows which, cumulatively, leave no mark which endures longer than, say, an hour or two but which will make sitting down an uncomfortable proposition for a comparable length of time, blows which are an inescapable consequence of failing to heed the verbal “that’s *enough*” seem the only sensible way to evenly balance the unfair advantage emotion has over reason. This, to me, falls *well short* of actual physical abuse but exists *well within* the upper registers of “attention-getting devices” for those women and children who have proven themselves to be of inadequate and/or unfocussed attentions.

Of course, in our present society, with its feminist-infected judiciary, any husband/father following this sensible course of action would very quickly run afoul of the voodoo profession and the law and find himself up on charges of common assault or domestic violence and (more likely as not) sentenced to “ist” style “re-education” in the feminist way of doing things. In our feminist-infected, feminist-misdirected society the husband/father really has only two courses of action open to him: a) capitulate to feminism or b) leave.

I think it safe to say that women/feminists – having adopted Impossible Things to Believe Before Breakfast numbers 15 and 16 (collect them all!) in *place* of verbal and physical discipline for their children (and in light of that 35% increase in Youth Crime) – have demonstrated that they are incapable of either understanding or administering discipline.

Slow-witted to the point of catatonia as feminists have, time and again, proven themselves to be when their emotions tell them one thing (“absolute freedom makes children happy”) and reason tells them another (“children need firm parentally-imposed discipline, both verbal and physical, and I, as a feminist, am not capable of administering either”) there is little hope that this situation will change anytime soon. It is, as is always the case, foolish in the *extreme* for men to concede any philosophical territory to feminists for exactly that reason. Caught between what her emotions are telling her and what reason plainly indicates, a feminist is capable of vacillating for decades (if not centuries) before conceding any self-evident point.

Yes, I believe that men must shoulder more than their fair share of the blame for the sorry state of affairs in so many areas of our misguided Feminist society. It is a natural mistake to assume that perception-is-perception-is-perception, but that in no way mitigates the blame that must attach to men for so carelessly overlooking for so long the dichotomy between masculine and feminine perceptions.

Take, as an example, the late Charles Schulz’s wonderful comic strip, *Peanuts*.

We all loved *Peanuts*, right? We were all reading the same strips and we were all laughing at them. If anything was a shared enthusiasm of men and women, an example of gender interchangeability, it was that We All Loved *Peanuts* (particularly in its heyday in the 60s and 70s).

But, it occurs to me, that the masculine and feminine perceptions of the strip were very, very different.

Men, I think, enjoyed the ridiculousness of the premise: a bunch of six-year-old kids talking like adults. One of my favourite strips had Schroeder coming out to the pitcher’s mound where Charlie Brown says something to him about how it’s driving him crazy how badly the team is playing. And Schroeder

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

says, "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards". Charlie Brown, of course, asks, "What?" And Linus comes out to the pitcher's mound and says "It's from the Book of Job, it means ... " and suddenly *all* of the kids are out at the pitcher's mound debating the Book of Job (with Lucy, of *course*, grousing, "What about Job's wife? I don't think she gets enough credit!") Job's wife, with her immortal advice as to how Job might escape his ordeal: "Curse God and die.")

A nice balance, the ridiculousness of children talking about these adult concerns with a little low-grade theology into the bargain.

But, I think for *women*, this was evidence that "finally, at least one man 'gets' it." "Gets" what? "At least one man understands that children are adults and we should be *treating them as adults*."

The "out of the mouths of babes" thing:

"If we would just do what the *children* are telling us to do, we could have all the world's problems straightened out in a week-and-a-half!"

Ah.

You don't believe me. "No, Dave. I think you've gone too far with that one. Give me one concrete example of Feminists treating children as adults."

Elian Gonzalez.

To me, *there* is a clear and perfect example of Feminism Run Amuck in our society. There is an example where, for a period of many, many months, it was "up in the air" as to whether or not a six-year-old ...

A. Six. Year. Old.

... was or was not going to be granted the right to apply for political asylum.

Political. Asylum.

And who represented the "yay" side? You got it. Feminist social workers and the voodoo profession. I remember being moved to wonder if Dell Publishing had had the opportunity to publish a *Children's Big Golden Book of Marxist Theory* or if Mattel had gotten the See-and-Say version of *Das Kapital* into Toys R Us in time to make a useful contribution to the proceedings.

I believe that every hollowed-out ventriloquist-puppet husband from Bill Clinton on down who *allowed* such a travesty to proceed for longer than nine or ten minutes – yes – I think they are very much to blame and are wholly culpable for dramatically worsening

the Feminist mess in which we find ourselves.

Which leads me to another example of feminist sloganeering: "Child poverty".

Gosh, I know what you mean. Before I was ten years old, I doubt that I ever grossed more than a hundred dollars a year.

That's *insane*. There is *no such thing* as "child poverty". Children are not *poor* and children are not *rich*. There is no such thing as a *white-collar* child and there is no such thing as a *blue-collar* child. Children do not file income tax returns. Children do not pay rent or arrange mortgages.

We are back in the realm of two-plus-two does not, in fact, equal five. The best evidence we have available would seem to indicate that two-plus-two, in fact, equals four, instead. You can debate the point if you wish, but I can scarcely imagine on what basis you intend to do so. So, let me just reiterate for the benefit of the emotionally-impaired:

There. Is. No. Such. Thing. As. Child. Poverty.

As a caring and compassionate society, we give to unwed mothers, unemployed mothers, unemployable mothers, unemployed ex-wife/mothers and unemployable ex-wife/mothers – *gratis* – a completely and entirely unearned income, the amount of which – relative to 90% of the world's population – can only be conservatively estimated as being somewhere in the vicinity of *mind-bogglingly indescribable wealth*. And let me – *quite* uncharitably – point out that the decision to *do so* was made by *men* at a time when women were as rare as hen's teeth in the legislatures and governing councils of our civilization.

We are, as men, perfectly aware that the vast majority of women are incapable of providing for themselves, let alone providing for their offspring. This is the underlying motivation in the development of welfare as we know it and the use of discrete euphemisms like "welfare" and "mothers' allowances" instead of "bovine charity" and "bimbo subsidies". I break ranks with my own chivalrous gender to point out that – when the loony left of Canada's own Political Action Committee on the Status of Women stages a protest on Parliament Hill (as they did in the fall of 2000) demanding a) greater independence and b) more social programs – they

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

make themselves irretrievably ridiculous in the eyes of anyone capable of coherent thought.

Feminists will always want more money from men, more money for unemployed and unemployable mothers. Because men are, in the main, compassionate and charitable fellows collectively, feminists tend always to get the money that they seek. If men are, collectively, too chivalrous (present narrator excepted) to point out the extent to which the whole sordid process undermines the feminist hallucination in toto – to point out (as an example) that “equal pay for work of equal value” is *already The Rule* as it *has been The Rule* for centuries, that it is, in fact, the *Central Reality* of our (largely) free market economy and it is only that women's work, on the whole, is of *lesser* value as determined by that (largely) free market economy (whereby, for instance, the value of the work of a self-publishing cartoonist like myself is established by The Rule of that free market as being considerably less than that of many, many other cartoonists and that of many, many other disciplines and professions) – it might be hoped that women would reciprocate by being so good as to desist from attempting to propagate any further the delusion that children are poor.

Children are *not* poor.

Children are *children*.

A child's wealth is the depth and breadth of interest and attention and caring and discipline and time (not quality time but quantity time) which is given to it by its parents with an eye to shaping it into a worthwhile adult.

Children are not poor.

Single mothers are not poor.

People in *Thailand* are *poor*. People in *Malaysia* are *poor*. People in *Iraq* are *poor*. People in *San Salvador* are *poor*.

As a single mother, you are merely *less indescribably wealthy* than you would *like* to be. Which – considering that it was your own series of unwise choices which brought you to the situation in which you find yourself – seems somewhat less a cause for either hand-wringing anxiety or “give ‘til it hurts” generosity which you seem always to think are the *only* two appropriate reactions to yourself and to your “better off than 90% of the world's population” circumstance.

I am a firm believer in the Islamic notion that the community has a right to a specific share of each individual's accumulated wealth – quite apart from whatever share is accounted for by taxes. There is no direct English translation for *zakat*, but that is, roughly, the concept behind it. Alms-giving-as-taxation, to feed the hungry in your own geographic community (I donate to the Food Bank of Waterloo Region). But my belief in and adherence to the *zakat* in no way diminishes my revulsion at the feminist effort to make children interchangeable with adults, to describe children as either *poor* or *rich* with, in short, the feminist tactical effort to entrench this view-point in law so as to increase the unearned income of unemployed and unemployable women by establishing a guaranteed income for each child (which incomes would, of course, become the property of the custodial parent – three guesses who *that* turns out to be). If this is *not* the sleazy, greedy and underhanded long-term motive behind the misuse of the term “child poverty” by feminists in the industrialized countries, I apologize, but I think it is ridiculous to entertain the idea that feminists have any *other* tactical objective in mind.

It is another example of feminists “crowding the centre,” attempting to make women interchangeable with men, homosexuals interchangeable with heterosexuals and children interchangeable with adults. To me, it is nonsensical. It is an Impossible Thing to Believe Before Breakfast. And yet, increasingly, it is the way we conduct our society.

Yes, men are very much to blame. Take the minor hit movie which spawned a sequel or two: *Look Who's Talking*. Is there any more universal a masculine trait than to supply a comedic voice for a baby – to narrate the unthinking and insensible gestures and expressions of a wholly unshaped and incomplete human-being-in-the-raw-material-state and to give it a thinking, sensible, humorous and ironic context far, far, far, *far* in excess of that being's actual aptitudes and abilities?

And could there have been any more universal a mistake made by men in doing so? A harmless bit of fun?

Perhaps, but then a man is always aware that a baby is a baby and an adult is an adult. It seems to me that men are culpable for missing – missing completely and thoroughly

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

– that the same cannot be said of a woman's awareness. In fact, with a woman, as an emotion-based being, exactly the opposite is true. To a woman, a baby, for all intents and purposes, as a being self-evidently capable of *feeling* emotions and capable of *displaying* emotions and *vocalizing* emotions, *to a woman*, in all ways which are vital or important or significant *to a woman* ...

... a baby is interchangeable with an adult.

So what is a game, a harmless diversion, a source of entertainment *to a man*, merely reinforces a central and (to me) imbecilic female conceit. If women did not necessarily believe, in context, that the baby was *actually* saying and/or thinking, “Uh, y'mind passin' me that bottle there, Mac?” all *that* did was reinforce for them that *their* perception of what *was* going on in that tiny cranium was the more accurate of the two (“Daddy is being so silly”), reinforce for them that their own predisposition to believe that life begins with the first visible expression of emotion and that – once *visible* emotion and *vocalized* emotion exist in a human being – anything which is grafted onto that being later (intellect, reason, literacy, etc.) is really just window-dressing. At best, secondary. At best, tangential. And reinforced for them that men – fathers – were and are frivolous individuals who perceive babies (and, as a consequence, everything *else*) inaccurately. Considering how dramatically limited the female intellect is, yes, I think that men are very much to blame for allowing a profound misapprehension like that to flourish in the female “brain”.

Tangent IV

It gets worse.

To me, it gets far worse when it comes to the *animal* kingdom and there, again, I think men must shoulder more than their fair share of the blame.

In the same sense that it is true that women see themselves as interchangeable with men, homosexuals as interchangeable with heterosexuals, children and babies as interchangeable with adults, it is also true, for the most part, that women believe that animals are interchangeable with human beings.

I believe, for the sake of appearances, they will allow themselves to be bullied into acknowledging that there is a distinction:

“Uh, you *do* realize that your cat is *just* a cat. That a cat is a very *low* form of life.”

Yes, pushed to the wall and having to, you know, say it *out loud*, *to a man*, a woman will grudgingly admit that a human being is a human being and a cat is a cat. But she is certainly not going to be amenable to exploring the subject to any great depth.

“That is, you *are* aware that, no matter how much time and effort you devoted to doing so, you could never teach your cat to play even the *simplest* card game, like Hearts.”

That's true. I know that little Snowball will never learn how to play Hearts.

Inside, I can practically guarantee you that what she will be thinking is: Well, so *what*? I know lots of *people* who have never learned how to play Hearts, and/or What's so special about a *stupid card game*? and/or I think it's more important what's *inside* a person than whether or not they can play cards. Even calling female attention to this, making them laugh at the absurdity of it (*I hope* making them laugh at the absurdity of it: otherwise we are all inhabiting a Circle of Hell far closer to the innermost ring than I have hitherto suspected) will, I am entirely certain, in no way modify the fact that this is the way they think – or, rather, “think”: with their hearts, first and foremost, their love for little Snowball or little Whatever-It-Is dictating the fairy-tale foundation upon which their lives rest: that little Snowball and Mummy are just two peas in a pod.

“Mummy.”

Consider that one, if you will, gentlemen.

As the comedienne, Rita Rudner, put it, “My husband and I just got a dog. Now, he's *not* a child substitute. At least, that's what his pediatrician tells us.” At one level – you know, confined to the kitchen, the laundry room, the backyard – however inherently stupid, there is a charming, amusing and whimsical quality to that – less charming, less amusing and less whimsical when one realizes that women are out in the workforce now. Many of them occupy positions of authority. And they are allowed to *vote*.

Sensitive as the antennae on an ant as the average feminist is to the slightest nuance or hint of depredation (however inadvertent)

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

which might in any way cast aspersions on her Inviolable Status as Citizen and Fully-Fledged Human Being, still it is the pleasure – nay, the *pride* – of many, many, many of them to refer to themselves as the “Mummy” of feral and insensible beasts and to “kiss” on the mouth a creature which uses its tongue to keep its anus clear of feces.

Here, again, the masculine gender must shoulder more than its fair share of the blame for this deplorable state of affairs, most especially for the historical decision to allow animals in the house. Clearly, this came about through the fault of fathers surrendering to the weakness they experience in dealing with their daughters. No lofty trajectory of the imagination is required to envision the *centuries* of pleading that must have gone into the winning of that first victory by a daughter over her father: inclement weather, undoubtedly, serving as the thin end of the wedge ...

“Please, Papa, it’s *freezing* outside.”

... and, in the succeeding years, the rest of the civilizational barricades between man and beast falling like dominos. (Well, all right, just this *once*) KLUNK (Well, all right but he *stays* in the entryway) KLUNK (Well, all right, but keep him in the *kitchen*) KLUNK (Well, all right, but keep him on the *hardwood*) KLUNK (Well, all right, but he has to stay on the *floor*) KLUNK (Well, all right, but he has to stay at the *foot* of the bed) KLUNK (Well, all right, but he has to stay on *top* of the covers) KLUNK

Who can doubt that we’re only a generation or two away from “Well, all right, but don’t give him the *good china*”?

It’s not hard to see the question that that first capitulating father asked *himself* and which each successive father asked himself as each successive societal barricade fell:

“Where’s the harm?”

The harm, I believe, as we are seeing now, is that women quite literally don’t know whether they are human beings or animals. Nature reflects and there is, to me, a fundamental danger to society in the undeveloped, tactical, emotion-based female “mind” staring lovingly into the eyes of a feral beast which derives interchangeable pleasure from eating, sleeping and licking feces from itself ... and with that female “mind” *identifying* her-(it-)self *with* that feral creature and (the crux of

this part of my thesis) *persuading* herself that she has *more* in common with a feces-licking creature than the opposite gender of her own species *or* seeing herself as having *just as much* in common with feral beasts as with men *or* seeing herself as a mediator *halfway between* man and beast *or* seeing herself as an ambassador to the world of men from the animal kingdom.

All, to me, are sickening realities to contemplate. All that is unknown is the numerical percentages of womankind’s members who mentally inhabit each of the four skewed outlooks.

What if?

What *if*, gentlemen, only three percent of existing women genuinely consider themselves to be human and ninety-seven percent consider themselves to be animals or part animals?

You think I’m being an alarmist.

Permit me to buttress my argument with the assertion that there is a world of difference between a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the masculine innovation of the 19th century – a nice civilized gesture, scarcely on par with a genuinely noble human enterprise (like ending slavery, as an example), but a nice gesture-and the Feminist “innovation” of the century just completed, animal “rights”.

Animal.

Rights.

Insufficient to screw-loose Feminist purposes is a Society dedicated to Preventing acts of Cruelty against Animals, an altogether sensible example of *noblesse oblige* from God’s highest creation on this earth to the lower life forms (*feel* the “ladies” *bristle* at *that* one). No, what is required by feminists is nothing short of Pan-DNA Rights and Freedoms.

Animal.

Rights.

Can the day be far distant when the local animal shelter will have to present a writ of *habeas corpus*, convene a “show cause” hearing and provide a court-appointed attorney (“Do you understand your Animal Rights as I have explained them to you?” “Woof.”) before they can be allowed to lock up a stray mutt found digging up lawns and scattering garbage?

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

Clearly, when womankind sets what passes for its "mind" upon "crowding the centre," it seizes upon anything and everything: — homosexuals, babies, children, cats, dogs — to do so.

It seems to me that this is part and parcel of women being the silver medallists in the human race. If woman cannot achieve the masculine gold medal, then everyone and everything else as far as the eye can see must be recast as a silver medallist as well. Gold medal status must be made aberrational by every means of collectivist exclusion available to the unfairer sex. Society must be reshaped in such a way that silver medal status becomes the societal norm and gold medal status is made interchangeable with it, subservient to it and/or moved to the periphery of its own masculine context which defines it.

There is a certain *hysteria* (in its literal definition which so offends — and *defines* — feminists) which obtains here: a demented, histrionic quality of "if I can't be equal to you, then I will cast myself into the gutter" if a woman can't be a man, she will make herself interchangeable with homosexuals, with babies, with children, with cats and with dogs.

"A woman's right to choose," indeed. And, to me, a lunatic misuse of free will, undoubtedly as old as free will itself.

Tangent V

(All quotations in *Tangent V* are from David I. Garrow's *Bearing the Cross*, William Morrow and Company, New York, 1986. Used without permission)

Before MIA became more widely synonymous with "missing in action," it was, first, the acronym of the Montgomery Improvement Association, an organization which — on the basis of the May 17, 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown V. Board of Education of Topeka* (which held that the segregationist doctrine of "separate but equal" was unconstitutional) — campaigned to desegregate the city buses of Montgomery, Alabama. The Association chose to do this by means of a boycott of the Montgomery City Lines buses by its Negro patrons, insightfully grasping the fact that the greatest leverage possible in effecting change in a capitalist society is the withholding of capital (the Negro population of Montgomery represent-

ed fully three quarters of all bus patrons in that city).

The MIA was composed of leaders from the Montgomery Negro community, many of whom were Baptist ministers. While the means (the boycott) and the end (desegregation) were clear, this *was* Alabama and the conquest of their own individual and collective fear was, clearly, their most pressing ongoing concern. When word came that newspaper photographers would be attending an early MIA mass meeting, some of the ministers seemed reluctant to volunteer as speakers. E. D. Nixon, a past president of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP (The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) rebuked them angrily:

Somebody in this thing has got to get faith. I am just ashamed of you. You said that God has called you to lead the people and now you are afraid and gone to pieces because the man tells you that the newspaper men will be here and your pictures might come out in the newspaper. Somebody has got to get hurt in this thing and if you preachers are not the leaders then we have to pray that God will send us some more leaders.

The presidency of the fledgling MIA devolved upon a young minister named Martin Luther King whose call to the ministry, by his own admission, "was not a miraculous or supernatural something, on the contrary it was an inner urge calling me to serve humanity". He had previously existed in "a state of scepticism . . . until I studied a course in [the] Bible in which I came to see that, behind the legends and myths of the Book were many profound truths which one could not escape." (italicsmine)

Now of course, I was religious. I grew up in the church. I'm the son of a preacher . . . my grandfather was a preacher, my great grandfather was a preacher, my only brother is a preacher, my daddy's brother is a preacher, so I didn't have much choice I guess.

The first time that Martin Luther King addressed the Montgomery Improvement Association, he told them, "We must keep God in the forefront. Let us be Christian in all of our action."

If it was true that conquering their own fear was the largest concern of the MIA membership, it was certainly no less of a pressing

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

imperative for the Association's young president. A critical moment arrived for him on the night of January 27, 1955 when his faith in himself and his ability to serve in his new capacity was at a low ebb. The phone rang, the latest in a series of anonymous callers to the home he shared with his wife and baby daughter "Nigger, we are tired of you and your mess now. And if you aren't out of this town in three days, we're going to blow your brains out and blow up your house." As Martin Luther King recalled it later:

I got to the point that I couldn't take it any longer. I was weak. Something said to me, you can't call on Daddy now, he's up in Atlanta a hundred and seventy-five miles away. You can't even call on Mama now. You've got to call on the something in that person that your Daddy used to tell you about, that power that can make a way out of no way.

And I discovered, then, that religion had become something real to me and I had to know God for myself. And I bowed down over that cup of coffee. I will never forget it. I prayed a prayer and I prayed out loud that night. I said, "Lord, I'm down here trying to do what's right. I think I'm right. I think the cause that we represent is right. But, Lord, I must confess that I'm weak now. I'm faltering. I'm losing my courage. And I can't let the people see me like this, because if they see me weak and losing my courage, they will begin to get weak."

And it seemed, at that moment, that I could hear an inner voice saying to me, "Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And, lo, I will be with you, even unto the end of the world." I heard the voice of Jesus saying still to fight on. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone. No, never alone. No, never alone. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone.

The King house was bombed several nights later, as King addressed the congregation at Ralph Abernathy's First Baptist Church. In his own words, King "accepted the word of the bombing calmly. My religious experience a few nights before had given me the strength to face it."

Addressing the crowd which had gathered outside his home, a crowd which (not surprisingly) threatened, at any moment, to turn into an unruly mob, King said:

I want you to love your enemies. Be good to them. Love them and let them know you love

them . . . if I am stopped, this movement will not stop . . . if anything happens to me, there will be others to take my place.

An ancient schism, as old as humanity itself, began to form within that "movement" hard on the heels of these extraordinary events. To me, it was a schism exemplified, on the one hand, by the comments of Jo Ann Robinson, president of Montgomery's Women's Political Council:

The amazing thing about our movement is that it is a protest of the people. It's not a one man show. It is not the preachers' show. It's the people. The masses of this town, who are tired of being trampled on, are responsible. The leaders couldn't stop it if they wanted to.

... and on the other, by the words of Reverend Glenn E. Smiley, a white official of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and an expert on non-violence and the non-violent strategies of Mahatma Gandhi. Writing to friends, Smiley described his first interview with Martin Luther King as "one of the most glorious, yet tragic interviews I have ever had." He went on to say that;

I believe that God has called Martin Luther King to lead a great movement here and in the South. But, why does God lay such a burden on one so young, so inexperienced, so good? King can be a Negro Gandhi, or he can be made into an unfortunate demagogue destined to swing from a lynch mob's tree.

After addressing one of the early Montgomery Improvement Association mass meetings himself, Smiley also wrote

Religious fervor is high and they are trying to keep it spiritual. Not once was there an expression of hatred towards whites and the ovation I received when I talked of Gandhi, his campaign, and then of the Cross, was tremendous. They want to do the will of God, and they are sure this is the will of God.

Unfortunately for Reverend, or, rather, Doctor King, his people and his movement, Smiley's influence was quickly overshadowed by that of Bayard Rustin, a known communist sympathizer, a suspected Communist Party member and a homosexualist who said of the MIA: "The movement [in Montgomery] is strong because it is religious as well as political. It has been built upon the

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

most stable institution of the Southern Negro community – the Church.” Most of Bayard’s comments, not surprisingly, amount to damning with faint praise. To the faithful, the Church is a stable institution only insofar as it is sustained by the abiding faith, of its members, in God. That is, the Church as “institution” is not the same thing as the Elks Club, *The Times of London*, Westminster or the American Communist Party. To view it as such is to endeavour – tactically – to diminish its infinitely larger and infinitely more significant role in human affairs to a commonplace, mundane and tactical-level. Not surprisingly this is always the approach secular interests take in describing the Church. Note Rustin’s description of the movement as “... religious as well as political,” as if the two forces were of comparable validity – as opposed to Smiley’s view of the early MIA as a Christian enterprise seeking to do the will of God in the area of racial injustice. “We must keep God in the forefront,” as Reverend King said.

One of the foremost potential problems that the movement faced – and which was not widely known until much later – was Dr. King’s womanizing, his manifold acts of adultery. It is almost inconceivable to me that someone could consider himself a good Christian and a minister of the Gospel and conduct himself in his personal life the way Dr. King did. Although the secular-humanist-socialists he allowed into the SCLC could remark with equanimity (as one staff member did) “I watched women making passes at Martin Luther King. I could not believe what I was seeing in white Westchester [County, an affluent New York satellite community] women ... They would walk up to him and they would sort of lick their lips and hint and [hand him] notes ... After I saw that thing that evening I didn’t blame him,” his behaviour was, obviously blameworthy. It seems to me that the sort of precautions taken by the evangelist Billy Graham of never communicating with women, one-on-one, unless there was a staff member present – “present” as in being self-evidently privy to any conversation however quietly whispered and intercepting any communication – should have been taken in Dr. King’s case. This is not foolproof of course. As any experience with women will tell you a) a slut is a slut is a slut and b) there is no slut quite as bad as a

rich, white slut. But, clearly, for a minister of the gospel message of Jesus Christ measures should have been taken.

Rev. Ralph Abernathy was assaulted in his church office one night and badly injured by a man who claimed that Abernathy had had an intimate relationship with the man’s wife. This prompted Los Angeles pastor J. Raymond Henderson to caution King that he must avoid “even the appearance of evil. One of the most damning influences is that of women. They themselves too often delight in the satisfaction they get out of affairs with men of unusual prominence. Enemies are not above using them to a man’s detriment. White women can be lures. You must exercise more than care. You must be vigilant, indeed.”

Presumably, Rev. Henderson’s warning had some effect – at least in the short term – to judge by the following event:

In mid-September King traveled to New York to speak at several churches to stimulate interest in the Youth March. That same week, his book [Stride Toward Freedom] was published and King made a number of appearances to help promote it. One of those was a Saturday autographing session at Blumstein’s department store in Harlem. King, surrounded by friends and admirers as he sat on a chair in the book department, was suddenly approached by a middle-aged black woman who asked, “Is this Martin Luther King?” King looked up and replied, “Yes it is.” Quickly, the woman pulled a sharp seven-inch Japanese letter opener from her handbag and slammed it into King’s upper left chest. The shocked onlookers grabbed the woman, and the store security officer handcuffed her. King was fully conscious and remained calmly seated in the chair until an ambulance arrived. With the weapon protruding from his chest, King was driven to nearby Harlem Hospital. As a team of doctors prepared for surgery, police officials brought the assailant, Mrs. Izola Ware Curry, to the hospital for King to make a positive identification. A loaded pistol had been found in her purse, and her incoherent comments indicated severe mental illness. After King identified her she was taken away to a mental hospital ... King would have a scar, in the shape of a cross, right over his heart, but otherwise would suffer no lingering ill effects.

I’m sure that, from the vantage point of my largely feminist readers, I attach too much significance to the fact that – because he was immobilized by this vicious assault – the

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Youth March marked the first time that his wife, Coretta, “stood in” for him and that it was Coretta King and Ella Baker who set up a temporary movement office inside Harlem Hospital during Dr. King’s recovery.

It was shortly after this that *Reverend* King was quoted as saying, “I don’t want to own any property. I don’t need any property. I don’t need a house. A man who devotes himself to a cause, who dedicates himself to a cause doesn’t need a family.”

Very unusual for a husband to even allow himself to *think*, let alone say *out loud*.

Of course (no great surprise) he got a house. And then a *bigger* house. Stanley Levison was quoted as saying:

The house troubled him greatly. When he moved from a very small house to one that was large enough to give the growing family some room, he was troubled by it and would ask all of his close friends when they came to the house whether they didn’t think it was too big and it wasn’t right for him to have. And though everyone tried to tell him that this big house wasn’t as big as he thought it was – it was a very modest little house – to him it loomed as large as a mansion and he searched his own mind for ways of making it smaller.

Meanwhile, back at Ella Baker:

Ella Baker, along with Rustin and Stanley Levison, constituted the third in a trinity of socialist-secular-humanist influences which lobbied intensively for *Reverend* King to confine himself to the role of Dr. King. Again, unfortunately for *Reverend* King, his people and his movement, she soon attained the position of associate director of the newly founded outgrowth of the MIA, the SCLC (The Southern Christian Leadership Conference). Originally a socialist-centred Southern Leadership Conference on Transportation (Rustin’s tactical “logic of the next step” move to expand the Montgomery bus boycott into a pan-Southern action) it was only through the insistence of *Reverend* King that the word “Christian” was incorporated into the title. Rustin had warned that such a move would discourage the non-religious from participating. Again, unfortunately for *Reverend* King, his people and his movement, that proved not to be the case.

When the SCLC foundered in a period of inactivity, a group of students, on its own initiative, began “sit-ins” at segregated lunch

counters in North Carolina and soon thereafter organized themselves into the SNCC (The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee) of which Ella Baker appointed herself a kind of socialist-secular-humanist den mother while still attached to the SCLC executive. She warned the students that the SCLC would attempt to take over their movement and insisted, in good secular-humanist-socialist-*proto-feminist* fashion, that the students be left to function without any adult supervision (you know, that “out of the mouths of babes” thing).

While undermining the SCLC in the minds of the SNCC students, Ella Baker continued to “serve” in her role as acting executive director (I would assume that Rustin, Levison and Coretta had pressured Martin Luther King to advance Ella Baker to such lofty heights in what was now a Christian organization only in the most *ostensible* sense), a position which she would ultimately resign:

Baker’s departure, however left a legacy of strained feelings [emphasis mine] in its wake. She had never held King or Abernathy in high regard and, once she had formally left the organization, she made no secret of her attitude. Baker had found them unwilling to discuss substantive issues with her as an equal [emphasis mine] and unresponsive to any critical comments she might offer. To James Lawson [an SCLC staff member], the root of the problem was simple: “Martin had real problems with having a woman in a high position.” Baker also did not support a “leader-centred” approach to organizing a movement and felt no special awe for King. “I was not a person to be enamoured of anyone,” she noted. The ministers of the SCLC, on the other hand, thought Baker was haughty and aloof with what they felt was a disdain for anyone who was a black male preacher. The resulting bitterness would not mellow with time.

In fairness to Baker, she *did* warn King early in her participation with the movement that “we are losing the initiative in the Civil Rights struggle in the south, mainly because of the absence of a dynamic philosophy *or spiritual force*” [*italics mine*]. Had King “stayed the course” – keeping God at the forefront of the movement through maintaining *exclusively* Christian leadership by Christian leaders (ministers and pastors) in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (I mean, duh) – the outcome, I suspect, would

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

have been very different. Alas, such was not to be the case.

It amazes me that, even with the religious experience in his kitchen in 1957, so much of Martin Luther King's efforts remained wholly and completely secular, humanist and socialist in nature. In his meetings with Vice-President Richard Nixon and Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson, his tone is always that of a Labour negotiator, a quasi-socialist, with nary a word said by him about God, nary an effort made to communicate as a minister of the Gospel to wayward Christians (Kennedy and Johnson being rather more wayward as Christians go, one would guess, than were Nixon and Eisenhower). *Had* Nixon, as an example, been addressed as a Quaker: "Mr. Vice President, how can you as a white Christian gentleman deny to your black Christian brothers the rights and freedoms which *you* enjoy?" it seems to me that it would have left a good deal less "wiggle" room. "Let my people go." *Reverend* King as Aaron, addressing Richard Nixon as Pharaoh. There were any number of approaches that made more sense when standing on the moral high ground (as Martin Luther King surely was) than to function as a secular-humanist-quasi-socialist mouthpiece for a run-of-the-mill Marxist like Bayard Rustin. Certainly, Martin Luther King had demonstrated, time and again, his oratorical skill in the striking – just *so* – of the "right note," *le mot juste* – and nowhere more exaltedly than in his "I have a dream" speech delivered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in the summer of 1963.

I have a dream that, one day, every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain and the crooked places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together...

It is hard to imagine *any* occasion in human history when the words of the fourth and fifth verses of Isaiah's monumental and awe-inspiring 40th chapter had so resonated with the souls and minds of so many people in one place and in one time than on that glorious sunlit August afternoon.

Let freedom ring ... When we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every

city, we will be able to speed up the day when all of God's children – black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics – will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, we are free at last."

Reportedly, Coretta King was *furious* in the aftermath of The Speech that she was not allowed to accompany King to his meeting with President Kennedy. I suspect that she had focussed her attentions upon an earlier reference in The Speech to "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers" and that her female nature – typically and misguidedly – believed this reference to black and white *children* had some analogous application to black *men* and black *women*, white *men* and white *women*. That is, if the Reverend Martin Luther King belonged in the Oval Office that afternoon, so did his housewife).

Anyway, it did amaze me that a man like Martin Luther King – who was capable of writing The Speech and who had been assured that Jesus would never leave him alone in his pursuit of righteousness, of truth and of justice for his people – would think that a socialist lightweight like Bayard Rustin had anything to teach him about what to say and how to say it in the Oval Office.

But, this is my last word on gender, so back to the "ladies".

The checkers-playing tacticianettes do not, ordinarily, surrender a high-profile position such as Ella Baker enjoyed in the SCLC without bringing in a replacement tacticianette. Such seems to have been the case and the SCLC board soon welcomed to its ranks Marian Logan, a New York fundraiser (friend to the lip-licking? ally of the note-passing?), as Ella Baker turned her attentions, more or less full-time to the radical, unsupervised and wholly secular SNCC.

[The low, nearly bestial nature of the SNCC was always typified for me by its one-time leader James Forman's assertion that "if the powers that be are unwilling to let my people sit at the table of government, we stand ready to knock the fucking legs right off the table," both for the mockery it made of the "Non-violent" part of the SNCC's

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

name and for his vulgarity in saying so in the Beulah Baptist Church.

Yes, sorry, back to the “ladies”. Quite right.]

What interested me about Marian Logan was that she circulated a memo to the other members of the SCLC Board in advance of the Poor People's March on Washington (which Martin Luther King whole-heartedly favoured, a position in which he was virtually alone of the SCLC executive):

“I doubt very seriously,” Logan wrote, that the Washington actions would have any positive effect on Congress. “If anything, the demonstrations may well harden congressional resistance and create an atmosphere conducive not only to the victory of reactionary candidates in the coming elections, but also to the defeat of those candidates who are, or would be, friendly to the social and economic objectives of our struggle.” Logan was also concerned that King and SCLC would not “be able to preserve the non-violent image and integrity of our organization” once the protests got under way. Given the “explosive potential of the situation,” serious violence would be inevitable. “You say, Martin, that you ‘will use disruptive tactics only as a last resort’ ... but you understand, of course,” Logan asserted, “that in view of the likely police response to these disruptive tactics, you are in effect saying that you are prepared to court violence as a last resort.” Logan was also “troubled and unhappy [emphasis mine] at how inadequately” the planning had been handled so far “It does not appear to me, or to anyone with whom I have talked, that an adequate job has been done.” And “there is the question of objectives. Have they been clarified? Have you worked out what you will accept, short of your total objectives ... ?”

In response to Logan's admonitions, King phoned her almost daily for more than a week in an unsuccessfull effort to persuade her to withdraw the complaints, which she had sent to the entire SCLC board. Andrew Young joined in the attempt, writing Logan and her husband, Arthur, that “we are too far gone to turn around” on the campaign. “This is very much a faith venture . . .” [emphasis mine]

King's reaction seems, to me, disproportionate. And yet he persisted, seeming to believe that there was some greater level of importance to the memo than revealed on the surface, as if ... as if the *actual* conflict between himself and Marian Logan was taking place on some *loftier* plane of existence, some more *crucial* battlefield than a differ-

ence of opinion between an organization's president and one of its board members.

Sometime later

King returned to New York City and went to the home of Marian and Arthur Logan, where he argued with Marian into the early-morning hours about the memo she had distributed to SCLC's board. King was depressed and exhausted, and downed drink after drink as he pressed her to withdraw her objections to the Washington protests. The Logans had spent many similar evenings with King when he had wanted to talk and drink until dawn, seemingly unable to find any rest in sleep, but this night was different and worse. King was unwilling to accept Logan's position and talk about something else. His mood changed repeatedly as the hours passed, from tension to calm, and then back to barely restrained anger and throughout it all he betrayed unusual anxiety with one hand tightly holding his frequently refilled glass and the other clenched into a fist with his thumb ceaselessly rubbing against the other fingers. It seemed that King was “losing hold,” Marian Logan recalled.

I suspect that that is what happened. In some very real sense, that night King did “lose hold” of the Civil Rights movement and it passed from his hands into those of Marian Logan and her secular-humanist confreres, the checkers-playing tacticianettes, the proto-feminists-in-waiting.

Over the next few days, King continued to phone Marian Logan on almost a daily basis. Finally, on a rain-ravaged night in Memphis he delivered a speech:

I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But, it really doesn't matter with me now because I've been to the mountaintop.

And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain, and I've looked over and I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But, I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And so, I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

“Sweat streaming from his brow, and his eyes watering heavily, King moved to his seat. Some thought him so overcome by emotion that he was crying ...”

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Early the next evening, Martin Luther King was shot to death on the balcony outside his room at the Lorraine Motel.

Of course, Marian Logan's memo could have been just that: a memo. Perhaps it was nothing more ... *real* ... than that. Perhaps it was – as it appeared on the surface – that Marian Logan merely had some ... *hard questions* ... for Dr. or Reverend Martin Luther King. *Hard questions* that he had been evading since the early days of the Montgomery Improvement Association. *Hard questions*: not the least of which was “how non-violent can a movement *be* that knowingly courts violence as a means (television coverage) to an end (social change)?”

Or perhaps her *hard questions* were, in some context, larger still, so large that they caused the Civil Rights movement to slip from the hands of Martin Luther King, minister of the gospel message of Jesus Christ, a man chosen by God (can any believer, in retrospect, believe otherwise?) to bring equality and justice to the men of his race, to “speed up the day when all of God's children – black men and white men” (italics mine) might attain to the promise housed within the preamble to the United States Constitution that “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal ... ” (italics mine)

... and through her memo, her *hard questions*, Marian Logan was the instrument which caused the Civil Rights movement to pass from Martin Luther King's hands – at the very threshold of destiny, on the very cusp of fulfillment, at the very dawning of that too-long-delayed day – first enunciated as a promise in the Constitution, clarified, subsequently, by Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and, finally, made inevitable by the enshrining of the 13th Amendment abolishing, in 1870, slavery's last outpost on this continent ...

... so that 1970 might evermore have been associated as both a centenary and a fulfillment of the black man finding his long-promised and too-long-delayed “place in the sun” of full equality with his white brothers:

“Free at last, free at last, Thank God Almighty we are free at last” ... but instead ...

Instead!

1970 would come to be synonymous with the onset of feminism, wherein the black man found his Civil Rights usurped by those who hold, instead, *these* poisonous, fairy-tale “truths” to be self-evident: that black men are interchangeable with black women and white women, that black men are interchangeable with homosexuals; that black men are interchangeable with children and with infants, that black men are interchangeable with babies, that black men are interchangeable with cats and that black men are interchangeable with dogs.

Because of a) my choice to not reprint “Tangent” in the Form & Void trade paperback (although it is relevant – so far as I’m concerned – to the “Recondite magazine” portion of Ham and Mary Ernestway’s story), b) the fact that I have no plans in the foreseeable future to publish any collection of my essays and c) mindful of the fact that issue 186 (despite being universally deplored by male and female feminists) is one of the few Cerebus back issues to sell out virtually overnight:

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*Dave Sim
Kitchener, Ontario
March 16, 2001*

THE THINKING MAN’S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ASSORTED MISOGYNIST EXCERPTS

COMPLIED BY KEVIN SOLWAY

“The Lamentations of Matheolus” (n.d.)

While married men necessarily know very little about women, Matheolus struggles through his bitterness to reveal more than enough of the truth about women, at the same time as serving as a warning to us all...*

Dominating Clock

This female clock is really driving me mad, for her quarrelsome din doesn't stop for a moment. The tongue of a quarrelsome woman never tires of chiming in. She even drowns out the sound of the church bell. A nagging wife couldn't care less whether her words are wise or foolish, provided that the sound of her own voice can be heard. She simply pursues her own ends; there's not a grain of sense in what she says; in fact she finds it impossible to have a decent thought. She doesn't want her husband to be the boss and finds fault with everything he does. Rightly or wrongly, the husband has no choice: he has to put up with the situation and keep his mouth shut if he wants to remain in one piece. No man, however self disciplined or clear-sighted he may be, can protect himself adequately against this. A husband has to like what the wife likes, and disapprove of what she hates and criticize what she criticizes so that her opinions appear to be right. So anyone who wishes to immolate himself on the altar of marriage will have a lot to put up with. Fifteen times, both day and night, he will suffer without respite and he will be sorely tormented. Indeed, I believe that this torture is worse than the torments of hell, with its chains, fire, and iron.

The Winning Sophistry of Wives

* [The following short extracts are from Le Fèvre's translation (c. 1371-2) of a subtle poem, the *Liber lamentationum Matheoluli*, written around 1295 by Mathieu of Boulogne (via a recent translation from Le Fèvre's by Karen Pratt, in *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, Oxford University Press, 1992)]

In addition to using arguments and disputes, a woman can lead her man to false conclusions by means of five different types of sophism. It's only right that I should give you some examples of their deception. Their linguistic sophistry is easily demonstrated.

Guy found his wife in her bedroom underneath Simon, who was bonking her on the edge of the bed. Once the act was over, Guy got angry, scolded and reproached his wife, saying, "Get out, wicked woman, may God destroy you, body and soul, for your wickedness is now only too clear." But the woman was very quick to contradict her husband, replying, "Are you trying to kill me? Tell me what's the matter?". And the martyr to marriage said to her, "I want a divorce." "Alas," she said "why do you dare to speak such evil words to me? My father was once deluded into thinking that what you are now accusing me of had happened to him, for he imagined that he had seen my mother behaving in a wifely manner underneath another man, but his eyesight was defective. I know that my mother died as a result of such an incident, and my other female ancestors in just the same way. Dear husband, tell me how you arrived at such a crazy idea. Where has this melancholy come from? Dear friend, do you wish to be the death of me? Do you want me to live, or to die needlessly having done no wrong? You would be a wicked man indeed. Tell me what you want me to do." The poor wretch wept as he embraced her and said to her, "Sweet sister, I want you to live, for if you were ever to depart prematurely from this life as your mother did, your death would be too bitter a blow to me." She replied. "Then you must acknowledge publicly that I was never guilty of such a crime or, I promise you, I shall die. Now go quickly and say that it was a lie and that you dreamt it, for it was in this way that my female ancestors met their untimely ends." Against this argument the husband could find no defence, and without further ado, retracted his accusations

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

under oath in the presence of their female neighbours, gossips, and cousins and swore that he had lied and had wrongly accused her. Thus his wife was exculpated, while he allowing himself to be contradicted in this way, suffered public humiliation.

Woman Over Wisdom

Women can sing to more than one tune. What good were the *Perihermeneias*, the *Elenchi*, divided into several branches, the Prior and Posterior Analytics, logic, or the mathematical sciences to Aristotle? For a woman surmounted all of these in mounting him and conquered the master of logic. She placed a bit and headstall on his head and he was dragged into solecism, barbastoma, and barbarism. The hussy used him as a horse and spurred him on like a female ass. She lifted her crotch far too high when she rode the male. The governor was governed and the roles of the sexes reversed, for she was active and he passive, willing to neigh under her. ...

In my opinion, he had the status of a horse, and yet he was well acquainted with the power of nature, reason, and justice. Yet why did they not gallop to his aid, bringing succour to their greatest proponent and master? I don't know how this could be. What will the logicians say about the ancient art of sophistry if their celebrated teacher and master was thrown into greater confusion than any madman with a shaven head? He could not have been more confounded. Alas, what will philosophy say, given that the great master was tricked by the figure of amphiboly? Never had such a thing been seen before: the woman was the mounted knight and the man, with a halter under his hoary beard, was the horse that carried the burden. Because of this unnatural act, practitioners of the liberal arts are in constant and perpetual confusion. May they be eaten by evil wolves, if they have not yet taken revenge for this act. This book shows in what way, in what circumstances, and by what means I have reached this sorry pass. There is no one who can offer me a cure for it, for my wife's evil charms are too potent. She is always armed with arguments which torture me terribly. I sigh, weep, and lament, and suffer more than if I had chronic fever. How am I going to write this work? I can hardly begin to com-

pose it without bursting into tears and lamenting.

Living with a Basilisk

I, who once used to compose and polish off fine poems while my studies flourished and gave me great pleasure, have now fallen on hard times, not because of advancing age, but because of the constant nagging which upsets me. It's making me old before my time, allowing me no truce or respite. While asleep I dream of battles which end worse than they begin; I feel as if I am constantly at war whether awake or asleep. It's not surprising if I'm fed up with suffering such a cruel life, a life worse than death; for death stops once it has killed you, whereas this torture goes on and on and yet I must endure it. Since I am dying a terrible death, I should serve as a warning to all other men not to get married and to learn from my mistakes, thereby escaping woman and her wiles. If one's neighbour's house is on fire and one sees the flames leaping higher, one ought to fear for one's own house.

If there is anyone who is so naive that he is untutored in woman's art, let him read this very work and select from it the most pleasing formulations himself. He will learn a lot from it provided that he uses it wisely. Dear reader, make sure that you rid yourself of women. Once you are acquainted with their opinions, behaviour and character (which I shall describe if I have the chance) then I believe that justice will prevail, that you will side with me and will rightly condemn them. Woman is always quarrelsome, a nag, cruel and shrewish. Peace and quiet are foreign to her. She recites her own litany of grievances, her own version of scriptures and the liturgy, just to annoy me. She often breaks her promises. My nagging wife sings her own *Tenebrae* [spiritual songs]; "Damn you," she says, and haunts my lamentations. She curses all the time or nags or weeps. Every wife intones and plays the same quarrelsome tune to her husband; she sings and chimes in every hour on the hour and is a terribly perverse creature. She is in the habit of shouting out and bawling during Responses, providing her own contrafacture of the *Tenebrae*. She begins the antiphon with "Damn you," causing her husband much grief and pain. She goes on like this all the time. Whether she is weeping or

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

nagging, her husband hears everything, whether he wants to or not. Yet he dares not complain about it for in return for one word of complaint he would get a thousand. Instead he has to leave home and escape from his house. This treacherous cow treats him so badly that the man has to flee. It's true that smoke, rain, and a wife's unjustified nagging drive a man away from his home. When a woman argues and disputes she is often the one to start the quarrel. The water becomes undrinkable, the smoke from the hearth clouds his sight, making his eyes weep and he is unable to stay any longer in those conditions. In order to start a fight the wife pretends that she has caught her husband in the act of adultery. She attacks or turns on him, or strikes their child so that it screams and she couldn't be bothered to calm it down, she is such a cruel viper.

Just as it is impossible for a fish to live out of water, so a wife can't live without abusing her husband and fighting. So I tell you truly, take in carefully what you read, for she is like a basilisk and may God protect you from this snake that kills people with its gaze. Above all retain this piece of advice: the only antidote is to flee it. Man is much safer with a snake or a lion than with a woman in fighting mood. I can demonstrate this with indisputable proof. You can tame all wild beasts by using chains or cages, ingenuity and cunning, and break their proud spirits, but you can't do this with your wife, for you can't get rid of an old crease in a boot. Even if you could conquer a whole empire by feats of arms, you would not be able to subjugate a woman. You can see this illustrated in paintings and Holy Scripture bears witness to this too. No man exists who has nothing to fear from her. If you are willing to acknowledge the truth, there is no man, however powerful, who isn't ultimately defeated by woman and her shield.

"Jangling" Woman

Indeed, the birds will stop singing and the crickets in summer too before woman finds the strength to hold her tongue, whatever harm comes of her words. For Calphurnia, more gossipy than a magpie, this was indeed her undoing, since she did not plead her case wisely. Her verdict was to bare her bum. Her punishment for her crime, which she fully deserved, was to reduce all women

to the status of second-class citizens. Each is deprived of and barred from practising advocacy. With her tongue and outrageous behaviour she banned all women. They have inherited her tongue and share in her guilt, according to the laws of heredity. Condemned in this way, rightly as far as I can tell, they are forbidden for all time to question witnesses and to defend cases. ...

Why is the raven black? Some writers lead us to believe that it was once white. She has changed her appearance as a sign of her fault, because she was a gossip, a slanderer, and a nag. If only our wives were now similarly metamorphosed by divine miracle and shed their nasty habits. If I had my way, no man would have to suffer this. Indeed, the devil was told concerning woman that God, in whom all good abounds, would have made the world a peaceful place if he had removed the cursed tongues of women, so ill-pained in the art of speaking. In many a land and many a country, wars begin and are caused because of women. It seems therefore that whoever gave them the gift of speech was out of his mind. If one were to dare to accuse God, He would not be able to defend Himself against the charge of giving perverse women deadly weapons when He gave them many tongues. He saw the evil that would come of it, and yet did not wish to come to our aid. It's my belief that it would be a miracle to make a mute woman speak. But truly, it would be a much greater marvel if one were able to shut up a woman once she is in full flow. The two are barely comparable. Why are women more argumentative, so full of idle gossip and more talkative than men? Because they are made of bone, while our bodies are fashioned of clay: bone makes more noise than clay. Note therefore my conclusion, which does not offer us much solace: it is their nature which makes them all foolish and proud.

The Free-wheeling Widow

As soon as her husband is in his coffin, a wife's only thought day and night is to catch another husband. She observes convention by weeping, but after three days can't wait to be remarried. If her children wish to claim their share of the goods and money they have inherited from their father, there's not one of them who doesn't pay dearly for it. She disagrees with everything they say, argues, and

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

is good at reproaching them, saying "I would already be married if it were not for your objections, for this has already happened to me three or four times. Now I'm having to dispute with you; what wretched progeny I have borne." Then she curses the fruits of her womb and tells them that despite their objections, without delay or further procrastination, she will marry one of her suitors, who will protect her rights for her. And she is so eager to marry that she takes a husband who brings about her ruin: who spends and squanders her money, an unbridled spendthrift, who will not be restrained as long as she still has something in the loft. He leaves her with neither a penny nor halfpenny, neither land, vineyard, nor house which he hasn't sold; everything has been spent. Then, when she sees how she has been used, she complains to her children and weeps for her first husband. Such tears, may God help me, with which women reproach their most recent husbands are an indictment against the heat of their loins. Their frivolity does not excuse them.

I don't think there is a more foolish woman than a widow all dolled up; she doesn't think of herself as past it, she often transforms and changes her appearance, adopting different hairstyles. She paints her face, rearranges her hair, wears make-up, adorns herself. One moment she is willing, the next she isn't; now she's friendly, now hostile; first she quarrels with one person then with another, praising one to the skies and piling scorn on another. And if ever out of habit many men waste their time with her, she is still too dissolute, abandoning the flower for the flames. In this way she proves to be naive and foolish, resembling the dung-beetle, which leaves the perfume of the flowers to follow in the wake of carts, wallowing in horse shit. And just like the she-wolf on heat, that always takes the worst male as her mate, so the widow always chooses badly.

Alas, things used to be different. A wife used to lament her husband's death and remain in mourning for a full year. Now she waits no more than three days; you'd be hard pressed to find anyone waiting longer! For as soon as her first husband slips into everlasting sleep and has been disposed of in the ground, his wife begins to wage war, refusing to give up until she has found another man to stuff her tights again, for she is incapable of

remaining alone. And I don't believe for a moment that she will wear black clothes to encourage mourning. Instead she will don a silk dress to indicate her joy. This is no more nor less than a disgrace. There is no bridle nor halter that could ever restrain her. She is forever coming and going; no man would ever be able to confine her to her room or to her house. She wants to be seen everywhere, so driven is she by her ardour. The burning lust of widows is an affront to decency; they creep and climb on to rooftops just like the frogs of Egypt; they are not interested in beds or couches unless there is a man with them. Who would have thought they would be like this? Saint Acaire preferred to be the protector of madmen and the insane rather than to be responsible for widows. Anyone who looks into the matter knows that he was right, for these women are mad and know no bounds and so he didn't wish to be their patron. Widows are a base and immoral lot, while a madman in chains can do no harm.

Bedroom Politics

Whenever there is a secret, woman from here to the island of Crete insists on discovering it. She seizes her husband, drags him off and takes him to bed, pretending that she wants to make love; then she kisses and embraces her husband and deceiving him with her words says, "I don't know what a man has to fear, for in the words of God, a man leaves his father and mother for his wife, they become one, hopefully one flesh, it really is possible. For God has united and joined them with one indivisible bond, tying them tightly so that they will stay together. Therefore every man should do whatever pleases his wife."

Then she strokes his head and resumes the kissing and lies down under him and, arching her back and spine, offers to him her carnal vessel, saying "I'm ready to do your will and shall prove this to you whenever you wish. I beg you to be mine, for we are one and in my case as God says, whether you like it or not, you are mine however reluctantly, and to my mind, rightly so." And as they draw together and she recognizes in his excitement that he is getting ready to copulate, she presses her breast against his, despite the silk of the bedclothes and blankets, saying to him; "Here you are, I'm giving you all I have,

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

offering up to you my heart, body and all my limbs, but please do not forget that you are my husband and lord. Now tell me what I ask of you, you can tell me confidently, for indeed God will know if I am lying. I'd prefer to suffer a terrible and sudden death than to reveal your secrets to others. Oh wretch that I am. I would never do it. You know how I am, you've put me to the test many a time, fair friend, wise husband, now tell me why I am not party to this information. Everything you know I ought to know too. No other person will ever get to hear of it."

Then she kisses and embraces him again, caressing and soothing him. With blandishments and flattery she presses herself right up against him saying, "How foolish and wretched I am since you scorn and ignore my words. Alas, I am truly dishonoured by my misguided love for you. If my neighbours knew of this, I would rightly be criticized, if the situation between us were common knowledge. I love you more than I love myself, I am far superior to other women, yet you deny me knowledge of your secrets - and I tell you all I know, never omitting anything. Other women cover themselves better, for they do not reveal their secrets, they are wise to do this. Yet I am foolish and generous, since I behave in this way towards you. And love alone makes me do this." What more effective and touching proof is there than the gift of one's heart and one's mouth? If the man tries to draw closer, she forbids him to touch her, pulls away, turns her back on him and weeps as if sad and upset. She pretends to be very distressed. Then there's double trouble. She is silent for a while, then sighs and in a grumbling tone says, after a few moments' silence, "Alas, how I am deceived. I can't help but lament; whatever this man wants, I want it too. God knows his every wish would be mine, yet he would do nothing for me. I know that what he keeps hidden from me he discloses to all other women. He who says that man is deceived by woman is misguided and wrong. In this respect too I have been misled. I love you yet you don't love me at all. You aren't mine yet I am yours. And because I love you I'm telling you that you would please me greatly if you were to tell me what I ask. for I would then reveal to you all that I know, and I wouldn't lie on pain of death. Alas, I am your chambermaid.

I'd rather be far away and be lying dead in a pit. The matter would have to be very important indeed for me to be able to hide it from you, yet you do not wish to reveal anything to me. I serve you as my lord, as a very important and superior person, yet you turn a deaf ear to my words Our love is hardly mutual."

The man is dismayed and ponders awhile but can find no defence against this attack; he does not notice the malice in her words and replies, "What's the matter, my love? Please turn round. I have never been so upset as I am now over your complaint. I love you truly and there is nothing else so dear to me." She then turns to face her husband, offering him her mouth and breast. He is completely taken in by her lecture. In response to a barrage of request and supplications, he reveals everything to her, thus committing great folly, for from then on, she is the lady and mistress, while he lives the wretched life of a serf. Perrette wants me to tell her everything, concentrating all her efforts on making me angry. If I don't resist, believe me, I shall be treated just as you have heard.

Women and Lechery

People say that women are lecherous. On the surface, these words sound insulting. However, with due respect to all ladies, it is necessary to speak as one finds. ...

If there is anyone who says that women with their tits and boobs are colder than the male, let him lose his purse and its contents. If anyone has come to this conclusion, he hasn't looked at the evidence carefully enough. For, by Saint Acaire of Haspre, their lust is much stronger than ours and turns into greater ardour. A woman underneath a man gets very excited. But let's say no more about it at present. ... Women are by nature very weak and frail and more fragile than glass. Ovid says that woman is only chaste when no man courts or chases her. Given their lust, the pope has granted them permission to marry without delay in order to pay the tribute their flesh demands. For otherwise they would hardly manage to wait and would offer or sell themselves to all comers.

In Defence of Antifeminism

Yet one might disagree with me, criticize my conclusion. and, putting forward the opposite point of view, suggest that my

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

words are completely untrue. For, if some women are evil and perverse and abnormal, it does not necessarily follow that all of them are so cruel and wicked; nor should all of them be lumped together in this general reproach. A speech is badly composed if one's general conclusion is only partly valid. Logic hates this type of argumentation. Nevertheless, this present work, which expresses the pain in my heart, wishes me to exclude nothing, but commands me to push my argument to its logical, if extreme, conclusion, which is that no good woman exists. Solomon, in his works, makes an amazing comment, which supports my case, for he exclaims, "Who could find a virtuous woman?" The implication here is, of course, that this would be impossible. Since he says this, who am I to disagree? Why should I be shocked? What's more, he says that a base and broken man is worth more than a woman when she's doing good. Thus there is no woman worth anything at all; I don't need to look for further proof. That's enough logical demonstration.

My exposition is clearly valid, for woman has - and there is ample evidence of this - deceived all the greatest men in the world; I shall be basing myself on rational argument. If the greatest are deceived, then the lesser naturally fall. In the street where I live they say that what applies to the greatest amongst us applies even more to lesser mortals. Who were the greatest lords? Who has ever heard of greater men than Solomon or Aristotle? Yet good sense, riches and reason were not worth a dung-beetle to them; all were made to look as if they had gone out of fashion; these men were both outmanoeuvred by women, deceived, vanquished, and tamed.

Mother of Calamity

It's true that women are lazy, but they are always ready to do harm. An evil woman just gets worse, becoming even more evil and wicked. It would take far too long for me to tell you everything about them, so for brevity's sake I shan't. Woman is not wise in this respect, for in her eagerness to do harm she only brings about her own ruin. According to the law, as I understand it, woman is not rational, nor does her love reside deep in her heart, but is there on her gaze for everyone to see. She entrusts her honour openly to her eyes, yet they can't help but fail to protect it,

since folly animates her gaze. With all her words, her chatter, and her talk, she could break a heart of glass; all her actions are stupid and foolish. Woman can do no good, indeed, goodness is destroyed and obliterated by her. Many a war is begun by women and many a murder committed throughout the world; castles are burned and ransacked and the poor made destitute. As every man and woman knows, there isn't one war in a thousand that isn't started by a woman and by her sowing of discord. She is the mother of all calamities; all evil and all madness stem from her. Her sting is more venomous than a snake's; there isn't anyone who has anything to do with her who doesn't live to regret it.

Monstrous Woman

Now you can see how foolhardy it is to take a wife. What will your response be? What is the point of your studying the matter? Don't get married, have mistresses. If you are weak by nature, it will be safer for you to have a hundred of them rather than devote yourself to one; treat them as if they were no more important than a straw. And if you are strong, take my advice, don't plunge yourself in the mire or frequent either one woman or many - I forbid you to have anything to do with them, for in the garden lurks a snake; and no one approaches it without regretting it afterwards.

Now I should like to rest for a while, for whoever sets out to expose the evils of the female sex, finds her poisonous acts too numerous to relate. Nature shows and teaches us that every woman is a real monster and that she is quite happy to put up with her own faults. There is no shortage of proof of this, or demonstration of how monstrous she is. It is said that woman was conceived without nature's consent. A philosopher testifies to this quite clearly in his works, saying that nature, having embarked on creation, was shocked when she contemplated her mistake and blushed as she became aware of it. Woman is a monstrous hermaphrodite, proving to be a chimaera with horns and a tail bigger than a peacock's or pheasant's. Thus she bears the marks of a monster, as this treatise informs you.

And if anyone were to say that women in general are slandered without taking account what each individual woman might do, and

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

that some, who are specially favoured, deserve our respect and praise, I would venture to say that this would be an unnatural thing and that there has never been such a great miracle. For their sex in no way prepares them to be virtuous or to do good, indeed they are predisposed to do the very opposite.

In a vision the narrator remonstrates with God about the creation of woman and the institution of marriage. Moreover, he objects to the injustice of the punishment for the Fall, and argues that God, as good shepherd, must save people, whatever their sin.

Termination of the Female Sex

"You should gather up your sheep and wander through the fields calling them, in case you find any that have gone astray, so that they can be saved by you. You must do all you can for their safety, chasing away the wolves with your dogs and staff, and your shouting. If one dies, and you see it, you should immediately try to revive it; for if a shepherd allows a ewe to die through his own fault, ignorance, or laziness, he must, according to the law, pay compensation, if he was in a position to protect it and even if Argus himself had tried to prevent this. And since the ordinary shepherd is expected to make

reparation, you are expected to do so all the more, you who are all-seeing and all-powerful, and the lord of all shepherds. Thus it follows logically that, since you are capable of saving your flock and your sheep, then you must and will save them. If you are not moved by pity, you will be the cause of our deaths.

"Yet whatever one might say about us men, who are in a position to be saved, I do not believe that you can have or save the soul of a woman. For you know and have clear proof of the fact that she was the cause of our fall and the reason for your death. Therefore you should not strive at all for her salvation. And when, on judgement day, Adam is resurrected and his body becomes whole again, then the whole female sex, which, as I have said, is full of venom, will revert to nothingness and will thus disappear. For otherwise Adam could not be whole again: if his rib were not replaced in its rightful spot (from which it was taken, and with which you created woman many years ago in your earthly paradise and then forbade her entry into it), Adam would not be complete. However, once his rib has been replaced, woman will be no more. Thus she will not be saved or resurrected."¹³⁸

“Esther Vilar” (n.d.)

Author's Introduction [to "The Manipulated Man"]

Over twenty-five years have passed since the publication of my book *The Manipulated Man* - a pamphlet written in great anger against the women's movement's worldwide monopoly of opinion. The determination with which those women portrayed us as victims of men not only seemed humiliating but also unrealistic. If someone should want to change the destiny of our sex - a wish I had then as I have today - then that someone should attempt to do so with more honesty. And possibly also with a little humour. I would like to take the opportunity presented by the re-issue of my book to answer two questions which I am asked again and again in this context.

People often ask me if I would write this book again. Well, I find it right and proper to have done so. But seen from today's perspective, my courage in those days may only be

attributable to a lack of imagination. Despite all I wrote, I could not really imagine the power I was up against. It seemed that one is only allowed to criticise women on the quiet - especially as a woman - and could only expect agreement behind closed doors.

As we women have, thanks to our relatively stress-free life, a higher life-expectancy than men and consequently make up the majority of voters in Western industrial nations, no politician could afford to offend us. And the media is not interested in discussing the issues involved either. Their products are financed through the advertising of consumer goods, and should we women decide to stop reading a certain newspaper or magazine as its editorial policy displeases us, then the advertisements targeted at us also disappear.

After all, it is well established that women make the majority of purchasing decisions. However, I had also underestimated men's

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

fear of re-evaluating their position. Yet the more sovereignty they are losing in their professional lives - the more automatic their work, the more controlled by computers they become, the more that increasing unemployment forces them to adopt obsequious behaviour towards customers and superiors - then the more they have to be afraid of a recognition of their predicament. And the more essential it becomes to maintain their illusion that it is not they who are the slaves but those on whose behalf they subject themselves to such an existence.

As absurd as it may sound, today's men need feminism much more than their wives do. Feminists are the last ones who still describe men the way they like to see themselves: as egocentric, power-obsessed, ruthless and without inhibitions when it comes to satisfying their instincts. Therefore the most aggressive Women's Libbers find themselves in the strange predicament of doing more to maintain the status quo than anyone else. Without arrogant accusations, the macho man would no longer exist, except perhaps in the movies. If the press didn't stylise men as rapacious wolves, the actual sacrificial lambs of this "men's society", men themselves, would no longer flock to the factories so obediently.

So I hadn't imagined broadly enough the isolation I would find myself in after writing this book. Nor had I envisaged the consequences which it would have for subsequent writing and even for my private life - violent threats have not ceased to this date. A woman who defended the arch-enemy - who didn't equate domestic life with solitary confinement and who described the company of young children as a pleasure, not a burden - necessarily had to become a "misogynist", even a "reactionary" and "fascist" in the eyes of the public.

Had not Karl Marx determined once and for all that in an industrial society it is us, the women, who are the most oppressed? It goes without saying, doesn't it, that someone who did not want to take part in the canonisation of her own sex is also opposed to equal wages and equal opportunities? In other words, if I had known then what I know today, I probably wouldn't have written this book. And that is precisely the reason why I am so glad to have written it. I would like to take this

opportunity to thank the handful of people who have stood up for me and my work. Typically, most of them were women.

The second question I am often asked is about the topicality of the opinions I expressed then. To what extent is what I described over twenty-five years ago still relevant to the "new woman" and the "new man"?

Here is a list of issues which I recognised in the original book to be men's most significant disadvantages compared to women.

1. Men are conscripted; women are not.
2. Men are sent to fight in wars; women are not.
3. Men retire later than women (even though, due to their lower life-expectancy, they should have the right to retire earlier).
4. Men have almost no influence over their reproduction (for males, there is neither a pill nor abortion - they can only get the children women want them to have).
5. Men support women; women never, or only temporarily, support men.
6. Men work all their lives; women work only temporarily or not at all.
7. Even though men work all their lives, and women work only temporarily or not at all, on average, men are poorer than women.
8. Men only "borrow" their children; woman can keep them (as men work all their lives and women do not, men are automatically robbed of their children in cases of separation - with the reasoning that they have to work).

As one can see, if anything, the female position of power has only consolidated. Today a career in the military is also open to women in many countries - but without conscription for all.

Many achieved for themselves the right to practice their job for the same number of years as their male colleagues - however, the retirement age was not increased for all of us. And now as before, it does not occur to the underprivileged to fight against this grotesque state of affairs. Only as far as the sixth point is concerned, has there been a significant change. In the more entertaining spheres of

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

work, there are more and more women who happily and willingly work and still keep their jobs despite having the children they nevertheless desire. But only a few of these women would be prepared to offer a life of comfort not only to their children but also the children's fathers, supported by their often substantial salaries; and fewer would further be prepared, in case of a separation, to give up their home and offspring and support the next admirer with what is left of her income.

Also, men would not like it: emancipation may be fine, but to be "kept" by a wom-

an is still not acceptable - housekeeping and raising children is not worthy of a "real" man. Sadly, women's manipulation of men is as topical today in the UK as it was back then, but so are the measures which could be used to end it - to the benefit of both sexes.

In the meantime, however, there are already a few feminists who are talking also about men as human beings, so the continuation of this discussion may not have to be conducted quite so loudly.

Esther Vilar, August 1998

Chapter One

The Slave's Happiness

The lemon-coloured MG skids across the road and the woman driver brings it to a somewhat uncertain halt. She gets out and finds her left front tyre flat. Without wasting a moment she prepares to fix it: she looks towards the passing cars as if expecting someone. Recognising this standard international sign of woman in distress ("weak female let down my by male technology"), a station wagon draws up. The driver sees what is wrong at a glance and says comfortingly, "Don't worry. We'll fix that in a jiffy."

To prove his determination, he asks for her jack. He does not ask if she is capable of changing the tyre herself because he knows - she is about thirty, smartly dressed and made-up - that she is not.

Since she cannot find a jack, he fetches his own, together with his other tools. Five minutes later the job is done and the punctured tyre properly stowed. His hands are covered with grease. She offers him an embroidered handkerchief, which he politely refuses. He has a rag for such occasions in his tool box.

The woman thanks him profusely, apologising for her "typically feminine" helplessness. She might have been there till dusk, she says, had he not stopped. He makes no reply and, as she gets back into the car, gallantly shuts the door for her. Through the wound-down window he advises her to have her tyre patched at once and she promises to get her petrol station attendant to see to it that very evening. Then she drives off.

As the man collects his tools and goes back to his own car, he wishes he could wash his hands. His shoes - he has been standing in the mud while changing the tyre - are not as clean as they should be (he is a salesman). What is more he will have to hurry to keep his next appointment. As he starts the engine he thinks, "Women! One's more stupid than the next". He wonders what she would have done if he had not been there to help. He puts his foot on the accelerator and drives off - faster than usual. There is the delay to make up. After a while he starts to hum to himself.

In a way, he is happy.

Almost any man would have behaved in the same way - and so would most women. Without thinking, simply because men are men and women are so different from them, a woman will make use of a man whenever there is the opportunity. What else could the woman have done when her car broke down? She has been taught to get a man help. Thanks to his knowledge, he was able to change the tyre quickly - and at no cost to herself. True, he ruined his clothes, put his business in jeopardy and endangered his own life by driving too fast afterwards. Had he found something else wrong with her car, however, he would have repaired that, too. That is what his knowledge of cars is for! Why should a woman learn to change a flat tyre when the opposite sex (half the world's population) is able and willing to do it for her?

Women let men work for them, think for them and take on their responsibilities - in fact, they exploit them.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Since men are strong, intelligent and imaginative, while women are weak, unimaginative and stupid, why isn't it men who exploit women?

Could it be that strength, intelligence and imagination are not prerequisites for power but merely qualifications for slavery?

Could it be that the world is not being ruled by experts but by beings who are not fit for anything else - by women?

And if this is so, how do women manage it so that their victims do not feel themselves cheated and humiliated, but rather believe to be themselves what they are least of all - masters of the universe?

How do women manage to instill in men this sense of pride and superiority that inspires them to ever greater achievements?

Why are women never unmasked?

Some Quotes

"If a young man gets married, starts a family, and spends the rest of his life working at a soul-destroying job, he is held up as an example of virtue and responsibility. The other type of man, living only for himself, working only for himself, doing first one thing and then another simply because he enjoys it and because he has to keep only himself, sleeping where and when he wants, and facing woman when he meets her, on equal terms and not as one of a million slaves, is rejected by society. The free, unshackled man has no place in its midst."

"Men have been trained and conditioned by women, not unlike the way Pavlov condi-

tioned his dogs, into becoming their slaves. As compensation for their labours men are given periodic use of a woman's vagina."

"If praise is applied in the correct dosage a woman will never need to scold. Any man who is accustomed to a regular and conditional dosage of praise will interpret its absence as displeasure."

"Someday it will dawn on man that woman does not read the wonderful books with which he has filled his libraries, and though she may well admire his marvelous works of art in museums she herself will rarely create, only copy."¹³⁹

"Bits of Zubaty" (n.d.)

*A compilation of writings from "What Men Know That Women Don't" by Rich Zubaty.**

"Rich Zubaty is a man who writes largely with his passions, and those passions often arise out of hurt and pain; but provided that energy stirs up something which surfaces as truths, who can honestly find fault? The following compilation of writings speaks many truths.

"A small criticism I have of Zubaty's ideas on women is that I don't believe he has fully confronted the lack of consciousness in women, which leads him to see women as willful beings, and then to blame women for their actions. More realistically, most of the blame must lay at the feet of men, who should know better.

"It is difficult for a man to entertain the idea that woman is an unthinking being when he has sacrificed his soul to win her approval."

- Kevin Solway, 2004

"I have been forced to conclude that virtually everything in this world is the outright opposite of what we were taught it is."

"Psychic events, I discovered, are mind events, ego events, arts like psychology and astrology and palmistry, which relate to what

* (Kevin Solway: "Released here with the permission of the author, Rich Zubaty.")

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

shape my ego is in today – what are the stars predicting for me today? – ego stuff.

“Spiritual events, on the other hand, are beyond the ego, beyond the sights and sounds and visualizations and verbalizations we use to construct our world. Psychic teachings come from parts of California and New York and India. Spiritual teachings come from sitting quietly in a chair or watching babies sleep. Psychic events are sensual; spiritual events are outside the senses. And I might as well spit it out right now: psychic events are essentially feminine and spiritual events are overwhelmingly masculine. Women who break their minds out of the psychic swamp are few and far between.”

“... This fact constitutes an awesome difference between the sexes with profound implications for human society. When a woman is talking about ‘spirituality’, she is almost always referring to psychic phenomena.”

“And right at the top of my list of misperceived things, in fact the essence of the problem, are the supposed attributes of men and women. The reason that men and women don’t get along, the reason the divorce rate in America is 60% and half the kids are growing up without dads, is that somehow, over thousands of years, men and women have swapped mental roles and each are acting out of character weaknesses which have been wrongly perceived as the inherited strengths of that sexual model.”

“To this day the average Australian aborigine – the one who hasn’t yet been seduced out of the outback by the temple prostitutes of materialism – still works only twelve hours a week. That’s all that’s required for him to provide for his family. The rest of his time is spent making art and dance and music, the very things that keep him harmonizing with his natural world.”

“To the Native American of the Pacific Northwest the man accorded the greatest prestige was the one who, at the annual Potlatch ceremony, gave the most away! He gave away the most salmon, the most honey, the most furs, and he gave away the most prayers; for everyone understood a real man

could always get more of what people needed and therefore he had no need to hoard any of it! This is masculine thinking.”

“This is what MAN is all about: the faith that his rapport with nature and with his God will continue to provide what is best for him. This is not rugged individualism. This is rugged spiritualism.”

“It’s my opinion that the tragedy of modern times – the past 8,000 years – is that the masculine pole has been deserted. It’s time to relocate the center of gravity of the human personality far, far, back onto the male end of the spectrum. Buddha, Jesus, some Sufi mystics – all of them tried to bring the male spirit back to life, but their messages were reinterpreted in the context of agrarian, mercantile nations. The message was perverted. Now fundamentalists talk about the Christian Work Ethic. THERE IS NO CHRISTIAN WORK ETHIC.”

“We don’t have the faintest idea what it means to be men anymore. Our male models are reconstituted women. They are the men women like, not the men God likes.”

“Starting 140 years ago, men were taken completely out of nature and sent in to the office and the factory where they manufacture and sell more items to make women’s lives easier. Thus, men have been maneuvered into doing work that historically, for 2.2 million years, had been women’s work: farming and making pots. Children were removed from the daily companionship of their dads where they exchanged energy sowing, reaping, fishing, repairing wagon wheels, investigating bird’s nests and hollow logs; and they were shunted off to school where they were raised, by and large, by women.”

“We don’t need more education. We need more spirituality – more of a sense of how to live happily with less.”

“Men don’t need to do what women want; men need to do what the Deer God wants.”

“It hasn’t taken women very long to figure out that they can do men’s work because,

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

after all, now men's work is mostly all women's work."

"Pursuit of happiness is primarily a female goal. Pursuit of the mysteries of life is primarily a male goal."

"You want to know what has happened to us men? Look at Native Americans. The decay and dissolution we see in them is the exact same thing that has happened to all of us. What we are seeing on the reservation is a speeded up version of what Western society has done to all men – killed off the visionaries and turned the rest into a bunch of alcoholic businessmen. What they have gone through in the last 200 years is what we have gone through over the last 2,000."

"Women are people-oriented and men are object-oriented. That's why we see so many women buying crap in the malls and so many boys playing team sports. Have you ever been in a bachelor apartment? There's a stereo, one sheet, and a plastic spoon/fork from Kentucky Fried Chicken. Wait 'til the poor sucker gets married."

"My ex is Jewish. My kids are Jewish. Morning minyan is the only place men can go to get away from the women and that's only because the women are still in bed. Judaism is a Matriarchy disguised as a Patriarchy. Jewish women obey no one – not their husbands, not their God. They are in many ways the mold for the type of women American society is producing."

"Judaism is a system for enforcing female values and the hell with goat herds."

"Catholics pray more to Mary than to Jesus. And can you guess who Mary is? Mary is a JEWISH MOTHER."

"We now live in a country where 60% of marriages end in divorce and half the kids are being brought up without dads. This is not men's fault. This is women's fault. 85% of divorce actions are filed by women. This does not mean that 85% of men are assholes. It means that 85% of women are profoundly unhappy with life."

"Is it not true that religious laws have a lot to say about wives being obedient to their husbands? Why would you think every single religion on the earth, in every existent culture, including the 120,000-year-old aboriginal culture, has strictures regarding this? Is it possible that the cultures that never took steps to curb the raw ambition of their women are not around any longer? Don't you imagine that some extinct culture in the last 120,000 years experimented with the total emancipation of women?"

"Ultimately, the main thing that gives a man meaning and purpose in his sorry life, the thing that gets him up in the morning and off to work at some stink-ass job, is the time he spends being enriched by his kids. Kids do that for men. They make us happy to be alive. Where does this society get off ripping that away from us and still expecting us to perform?"

"Men know a lot of things women can never know. I have no doubt it is the same for women. Marriage was intended to achieve a golden mean between the practicality of women and the soaring inspiration of men."

"Men have always been the dreamers, the poets, the artists, the imaginers. Men don't talk as much as women, not because they are insipid, but because they perceive reality differently. Men do not see the same things. We look for essence more than form."

"Men cast their nets into the sea of life, over and over again, mostly coming up empty. But eventually they bring in buckets full of many-colored fish, and women gather on the shore to sort them and haggle over the price. That's how the world works, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of Siam – not how you see it on TV where the men are stumbling, bumbling, inarticulate, incompetent fools who can't even answer the phone without dropping it on their foot."

"Women manipulate the bananas out of their kids, especially their sons, creating vicarious existences to supercharge their own dull egos – and they have the nerve to call that nurturing."

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

"School is the place you go to learn all the things that are exactly the opposite of what you need to know to succeed in life. Life requires cooperation and giving of your time to other people and to yourself. School teaches you to compete for grades."

"John Gatto, 1991 New York School Teacher of the Year, said – shortly after he quit teaching – that he was tired of teaching kids how to fit into a society that he didn't care to live in anymore."

"[School] That's where you went to learn to read so you could study the holy book which told you everything you needed to know about how to live a successful life in your given culture. That was school. Now you learn computers. Now you go to a place where you find out William Shakespeare was a great man, but you don't even hear the names of Jesus or Buddha or Moses or Mohammed or Krishna or Ahura Mazda or Black Elk. What kind of education could anyone possibly get in a place that ignores the major players in the growth and development of human civilization, but where students are trained to hang on the sensuous and undeniably compelling words of a possibly pseudonymous 16th Century actor?"

"Before Astarte and her agricultural plotters a man never had to fear hunger because he could always say a prayer, pick up his bow, and go shoot a rabbit. Now they call that trespassing!"

"The neglect, indeed the rejection, of wisdom has gone so far that most of our intellectuals have not even the faintest idea what the term could mean. – E. F. Schumacher (an economist)."

"Do you ever listen to women talk? Do you get the idea that the foundation of their belief system is that the world is essentially a good place? Or do you get the feeling from them that life is a constant battle of things to be manipulated and arranged?"

"Our brain is a gonad, a sex gland."

"The problem is that our habitat is being destroyed. Our territory has been fenced and

plowed under, our ivory sold for earrings, our children poached to serve institutions of higher something or other. We are being squeezed out by feminist values. There is scarcely a real man left alive."

"We've created parks for wild elephants; maybe we'll have to establish some game reserves for men – human nature sanctuaries, monasteries of maleness, museums of the soul."

"It has been shown that the right brain is bigger in men than in women. That is, men are naturally endowed with a greater physical brain capacity for embracing the spiritual and intuitive dimensions of life. Clearly this is the exact opposite of what we have been led to believe."

"Sandra Witelson suggests that greater separation of brain spheres in males makes it easier for them to do two things at once – easier to do what the guru do – live in the paradox. Women are handicapped in the sense that if they can't put a word on it they don't see it! All the psychic garbage aside, unless an image or a feeling or a sound can be named, it can hardly be noticed at all by a woman. ... No wonder there are so few women artists and spiritual leaders, and so many psychics and realtors and lawyers."

"Art and spirituality, by definition, defy verbal description; they evoke sensations that are outside our normal repertoire of phonic symbols. Shortly I will show that females have better fine-hand motor skill aptitudes than men and that's why you see so many of them in arts and crafts classes making baskets and ceramic butterflies, but creative giants like Marc Chagall and Pablo Picasso could scarcely be accused of exercising fine motor skills. What they can be credited with is poking a maniac's peephole into the mind of God."

"Women are given to logicizing: constructing rational-sounding sentences which are essentially word association games. Mention the word 'hose' in a sentence about boats and you're just as likely to end up talking about stockings. Men get frustrated to hell conversing with women because women think noth-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ing of skipping off the topic at hand to track down some word association. It's not a question of their being irrational, though that's what they're most often accused of. The problem is one of being too literal. When the conversation wanders into an area which is unfamiliar to them, rather than just listening, they will leap out at some random word and jerk the whole thread of thinking back into some groove that is familiar to them."

"Women have more emotions, men have deeper feelings."

"Maharishi has said that life is 100% Unity and 100% Diversity – probably the most direct statement of truth I have ever run across. He bids us to live in this fundamental paradox. This sort of koan opens a doorway in most men's minds, a vista on greater things. Most women go into spasms of dissociation when this thought ricochets around inside their skulls trying to find a solid place to land."

"For a woman to break out of her psychic stew of verbal props must be as frightening as leaping off a bridge into a misty bottomless canyon. It is not part of her experience; she has nothing to hang on to. Women are biologically disposed to expressing life with words. It is not a fault per se, but neither should men feel inferior because we don't reduce the vastness of our right brains into words that women understand. That's expecting an elephant to fly. We're not made for that. We have other strengths."

"If I tell my kids, 'I happened upon a moment of Buddha consciousness standing on a street corner', my son will say, 'What's Buddha consciousness?' and my daughter will say 'What street corner?' I love my daughter more than all the raindrops that fall on the Pacific Ocean in 1000 years, but notice from her answer that one could easily be mistaken into assuming that she knows exactly what Buddha consciousness is and she just needs to pinpoint where to find it, when, in fact, she knows nothing about it at all and therefore the words don't even stick in her head. This is language? This is communication" I'm not convinced most women have any idea at all what communication is."

"Sharing with a woman most often means responding to her questions. Sharing with a man means being quiet and just being with him, absorbing the silent wisdom of the universe that pervades every moment."

"... We have shattered another toxic myth: women are not more attuned to relationships than men. In fact, men are more perceptive of relationships in all things. ... Men, with more compartmentalized brains, have a whole different vista on the relationships between things and between people. Men don't worry too much about what they are feeling because they know that, just like the tides, those feelings will pass. Feelings are not any sort of constant, or anything substantial to run your life on. We don't like talking about emotions any more than we like talking about clothes. You have them. So what? They're not the basis of a life well lived."

"Turner's Syndrome Kids – kids born with only one X chromosome – are so entirely female they are born without ovaries so they have no opportunity whatever of secreting 'male' androgens (like testosterone, which is found in both men and women, and which is the main sexual activator in our bodies). These kids are disproportionately protective of objects like toys and dolls and they adore jewelry and rings. Here is the unopposed female instinct, Mater, at work. Kids who don't have a trace of male hormones in them instinctively hoard objects. They shun sports, they love to go shopping. Why would this simple observation come as a surprise unless we had all been brainwashed into believing that boys love objects and girls love people."

"Prehistoric woman, say Moir and Jessel, with a shorter life span and more pregnancies than modern women, could expect 10 menstruations in her life. Modern women can expect 400! We have to put up with 40 times more shit from our women than biology ever intended, and they expect us to believe that we are the problem. Contrary to toxic rumor, pregnant women are the happiest, most centered, women in the world. Women were intended to spend the great part of their young lives pregnant, not working in offices. It's a biological fact."

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

"Men apply for ninety-nine percent of all patents. Genius may have a lot to do with the greater male facility for single-mindedness – separation of the brain spheres – say Moir and Jessel. We can stay in our right brain, our intuitive brain, for lengthy periods of time, as long as no one jerks us out of it by asking us where we put Bobby's muddy shoes. Talking is a form of mental abuse – violence – perpetrated against men, by women, on a constant, unremitting, incognizant basis day in and day out."

"The duration of modern childhood has become an oppression of men. The son who used to be available to help dad cut wood and catch food is still in school for fifteen more years! It is a genuine outrage that we have arrived at the societal consensus that the purpose of a man's life is to pay other people to raise his kids."

"Ruben Gur has found that women pick up emotional signals with much less effort than men. He determined this by measuring blood flow to the brain while testing his subjects to interpret certain emotional cues. This is the sole example of what we call 'women's intuition'. that I have run across in my two years of research. It exists, but it exists within the limited parameters of 'reading emotions.'"

"Old age becomes a war of the sexes to see whose brain content is going to dominate the home front. Sadly, if grandpa is not permitted to build a hogan of his own out behind the chicken coop he will be trampled by an invading army of words. He waves the white flag and sets up camp by that lake inside his mind that he remembers from when he was a boy. It is one of the forgotten jobs of this society to protect old men from the cheekiness of old women."

"Neuro-scientists have recently discovered that the places in the human brain that produce the most endorphins and that contain the largest concentration of endorphin receptors are those involved most intimately with learning..."

"If you're redesigning a modern city from the ground up, get a female architect. If

you're designing a city under the sea, get a man. What are we saying? That women are not creative? Then why are art classes comprised of 80% females? Because women, biologically endowed with superior fine motor skills, have an easier time controlling brushes. For drawing horses or flowers these are perfect attributes. But if you are trying to capture the soul of a Bolivian shaman, better take along a man."

"When I was a kid all the faces on TV were men. Now they're all women and manholes – even sportscasters. We are being hourly bombarded with gossip and snippets of information about how to do things that nobody is actually going to do. We've been bestowed the Fix-It-Philosophy, that if the President just does this or doesn't do that everything is going to be wonderful or awful. The media is guilty of government by gossip, and who are they serving? The people who do the shopping. The women."

"In Indian philosophy prakriti is matter, the physical, the feminine; purusha is spirit, consciousness, masculine. If you don't like to think about God think about this: the purveyors of spirit and consciousness and form and yang energy have always, in every culture, been men. In cultures separated by thousands of years and thousands of miles the vessels of the spirit were always men."

"School is where boys go to be shamed by women. School is where boys go to learn how to be men from women in the absence of God or religion or clear value systems. When I talk about feminization and secularization and materialization of society I am talking about the same thing."

"And what of the male teachers? Undenially there are many fine men and there need to be more in a country where 85% of all teachers are white women, but, a man who is less than a man can be more damaging to boys than a domineering mother. And the chance of hiring feminized men in schools is fairly high because those eligible and willing are those who made it through a feminized school system in good standing without conflict or failure."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

"School is the place where boys go to be shamed by girls. It's never happened before in history."

"We have been invaded by the meme which asserts that the more organized society is the better it is. The better for whom?: Women and manholes."

"College is the haven of middle class culture and feminized behavior, says Patricia Cayo Sexton in *The Feminized Male*. Boys who survive college are the ones who have been successfully feminized."

"What this country needs to light a fire up its wazoo is a one-week strike by anyone who considers himself a "real" man. That would be more devastating than Hurricane Andrew and the San Francisco Earthquake all rolled up into one. Just one week of real work not getting done. Out with the manholes, up with the men."

"We spend our marriages trying to wrest the same affirmation from our wives that we got from our moms, way back when, before we could even "think". Our wives accuse us of trying to get them to mother us and it's true, we are, that's how we were trained."

"Esther Vilar in *The Manipulated Man* says, 'If praise is applied in the correct dosage a woman will never need to scold. Any man who is accustomed to a regular and conditional dosage of praise will interpret its absence as displeasure.'"

"Most jilted male lovers and husbands have an explosive mental meltdown at their beloved's infidelities, which is vastly out of proportion to what they are being deprived of. It feels to them as if they are being torn away from their mother's bodies, and indeed, that's just what is going on down deep in their psyches."

"Shame, that deep feeling of worthlessness and helplessness, is precisely the result of withheld praise. Regarding my own mother I've always referred to it as 'withdrawal of love'. Even now, 43 years after the fact, she can set off an awful, depressing, manic, physical grinding in my stomach simply by with-

drawing her love. Clearly she trained me to respond that way eons ago, before I had any sense of how anything works. In its way, it is sheer brutality. This is the meaning of Jesus' admonition that we must learn to hate our mother and father if we expect to find God – find inner peace."

"God says surrender your ego. Mom says hang onto your ego so I can continue to use it to shame you into doing what I want. Who do you want to believe? God or mom?"

"Do you wonder why so many more men than women drink and abuse drugs? Here is the substance of addiction. We were strung out on praise early in life and without regular doses of praise we hurt so bad and feel so useless we have to try to kill the pain somehow. Ah, that first glass of beer, that first joint, how it took the pain away!

"Responsible older men used to be available to initiate younger men away from this bondage to women. Without the mental breakdown that accompanies initiation men remain enslaved to female praise. It's a fact, and an outrage. We are letting them rent free space in our heads."

"Vilar says, 'Girls are given dolls and boys are given train sets. While boys are learning to keep the wheels on the track girls are scolding and praising their dolls just like mommy does to them. Thus, the boy will become adept at manipulating the physical world and the girl will become adept at manipulating him into manipulating it for her.'"

"Our lives are replete with technical marvels: automatic dishwashers and microwave ovens and hot running water and electric garage door openers. ... Is it true that in the absence of beating clothes on rocks and carrying water jugs on our heads we have meditated more on the essence of creation? No. We just chase around faster and faster trying to keep up the payments on all our labor saving gadgets."

"But back to Esther Vilar: 'Someday it will dawn on man that woman does not read the wonderful books with which he has filled his libraries, and though she may well admire his

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

marvelous works of art in museums she herself will rarely create, only copy.”

“We have lost the sense of the sacred in our lives. Women were entrusted with the education of children and what do we have? The objectification of learning. A bunch of stupid rules. If we cannot resurrect the wherewithal to relate ourselves through our art to the world we live in we are doomed to extinction.”

“Women love money because they love shopping – power over objects – and they love men who give them the money to have this power.”

“Says Vilar: ‘Once a particular field of work has brought a man success and financial security, it is uncommon for him to test his abilities in another sphere – his supply of praise might be dangerously reduced. Like Miro and his dots-and-lines technique, Johann Strauss and his waltzes, and Tennessee Williams with his plays about psychotic women, he will stick firmly to his successful technique. The risk of him attempting to be the measure of his own success is too great for him to take.’”

“When people talk about the ‘woman who stands behind the man’ what they mean is that even if she did not lift one finger to help him, at least she held in check her vast repertoire of tools with which she could have sabotaged his delicate, uncertain, creative leap. It’s not easy for a woman, with limited right brain and no creative disposition, to resist critiquing and manipulating her spouse into more logically productive activity. There are no more than a handful of women alive who can see their way to supporting men’s follies when the paycheck stops coming in.”

“A man is generally delighted to find that his wife is taking up painting or weaving or writing because this means that she has less time for shopping or manipulating him, or arranging romantic trysts. Who cares if the dirty dishes pile up? If she’s happy she’s not going to torment him.”

“Woman is not a Goddess. She is a breathing bag of protoplasm – spiffed up with pink

panties and blue eyeliner. She is earth, not sky. Down, not up. Her children are as much a part of her body as her arms and legs, and when she claims to have sacrificed everything for her family it is akin to saying she did everything she possibly could for her thighs and hips.”

“Says Vilar: ‘Women really are callous creatures – mainly because it is not to their advantage to feel deeply. Feelings might seduce them into choosing a man who is no use to them, i.e., a man who they could not manipulate at will. Listen to the conversation of young lovers in the park. It is ALWAYS about the female trying to convince the male to do, or not do, something. The first thing a woman wants to know is whether she can manipulate the man. That is the beginning of the relationship, the beginning of ‘I love you.’”

“But she knows, at the same time, that it is absolutely necessary for ‘woman’ to enact the role of a sensitive being, or man would become aware of her essentially cold, calculating nature.”

“Through double-signals, deception, and feistiness women create discord that they expect men to repair, “to show me you love me.” This is not helpless emotionalism; this is analytical manipulation run wild. Baffle them with cowshit. And men, the deep lovers, put up with it.”

“Says Vilar: ‘What an advantage a man would have if he only realized the cold, clear thoughts running through a woman’s head while her eyes are brimming with tears.’”

“Let us recognize and establish and conclude that men feel things more deeply than women! The only remarkable thing about any of this is that we would expect it to be any different. A Female Meme has been telling us for centuries that women are more emotional. than men, but who are the passionate artists? Who are the passionate musicians? Who are the passionate inventors? Men, men, and more men!”

“Women are emotional faucets. A woman can insult the intestines out of her husband, brush on some eyeliner, go to a dinner party, and have a wonderful time, meanwhile leav-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

ing the poor man writhing in pain all night. And why does he keep coming back for the abuse? Because he needs the praise that mom taught him to need. And he needs sex.”

“In America and Europe, men's libidos are constantly being aggravated and stimulated. Soda ads, short skirts, magazine covers, beer commercials, ruthlessly stimulate his sex. His relentless exposure to things feminine keeps him in a constant state of sexual arousal – a testosterone nightmare of cruel pervasiveness which is not known in "primitive" societies.”

“When a man says ‘I love you’ he's thinking about what he can give her. When a woman says ‘I love you’ she's thinking about what she will get. It's a perfect match.”

“She praises him, she affirms him, she takes his money, and he's addicted to it. This is the manhole. The man more committed to female values than indeed, even women are.”

“Says Vilar: ‘Since men are strong, intelligent, and imaginative, while women are weak, unimaginative, and stupid, why isn't it men who exploit women? Could it be that strength, intelligence and imagination are not prerequisites for power but merely qualifications for slavery? Could it be that the world is not being ruled by experts, but by beings who are not fit for anything else – by women?’”

“Why do you suspect mothers-in-law and wives don't get along? They're both competing for the same praise/manipulation territory in their son's/husband's brain.”

“Women work less and get more than they ever have in the entire history of life on earth – and they're not happy about it.”

“Women have taken great care to ensure that their lobby, the clergy, are always men. First, because the female image might be damaged if they represented their own interests – men might think them calculating – and second, because they know men rate feminine intelligence rather low, which is why they can only influence a man's emotions. Advice from another man, and one respected from childhood, is much more likely to be listened to and taken. Although

this advice always benefits women it does not reflect hostility on the part of this holy lobby toward "normal" men, but is a direct consequence of that lobby's financial dependence on women.”

“Men, the carriers of the Spirit throughout the ages, have been put to work with tractors and shovels to create the wealth which is garnered by women and priests. It's like a science fiction nightmare. But it's real.”

“Men are slaves to women and women serve themselves.”

“Vilar says: ‘Questions about the meaning of life do not interest woman. Since she does not think abstractly the problems of existential anxiety do not touch her. All she needs is an excuse for making one particular man work for her long after he ceases to want to go to bed with her. This excuse is provided by bearing his children.’

“‘When a man engenders children he gives a woman hostages in hopes that she will exploit him forever.’”

“Vilar says: If, occasionally, women do see more clearly than men it is only because their feelings, unlike those of men, are never involved.”

“Says Vilar, ‘The only important act in any woman's life is the selection of the right partner.’”

“Says Vilar, ‘American women, more than other women, fail to consider men as fellow human beings. And American men prefer to see themselves in this role: a man's salary is the yardstick of his worth. America is the only place where a badly paid professor is a bad professor, and an unsuccessful writer is a bad writer. For the Latin American male, masculinity is still associated with sexual potency. For the American male, however, the association is directly with money.’

“‘The American man knows that happiness comes only through women, and women are expensive. He is ready to pay that price. As a young adult he pays in advance, as a grownup he pays in installments, and as a corpse he is cashed in for a fortune.’

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

“The American man, more than any other man, mistakes his wife's lack of intellectual ambition for modesty, her stupidity for exceptional femininity, her giving up responsibilities for love. More than any other man he is able to close his eyes to the evidence of his own exploitation.”

“How come a ‘liberated’ woman won't willingly go to work to support her husband and children at home?”

“Says Vilar, ‘To a woman love means power, to a man enslavement. For the sake of love’ woman will do things that are only of advantage to herself, while man does only those things that will harm him. ... Only woman can break the vicious cycle of man's manipulation and exploitation, but she will not do it. There is absolutely no compelling reason why she should. It is useless to appeal to her feelings because she is callous and knows no pity. And so the world will go on, sinking deeper and deeper into this morass of kitsch, barbarism, and inanity called Femininity.’”

“Says Phyllis Schlafly, ‘Men are philosophers and women are practical. Men may philosophize about how life began and where we are heading; women are concerned about feeding the kids today... Women do not take naturally to a search for the intangible or abstract.’”

“Men are at home with mysteries and paradoxes, tracking strange creatures over uneven mental terrain, following a flash in the bushes or a quirky sound in a hollow. Women cannot stand a mystery that cannot be solved. It shrivels their circuits.”

“We have taken the worst of the nomadic and the agricultural ways of life and are building a world out of them. Unlike nomadic kids our kids are in school for twenty years starting as soon as they get out of diapers. They are not producing anything, they are an enormous drain on their parents, and they're not even having fun or learning basic values. Half of them are being raised without dads and have no notion whatever of the male modes of behavior.”

“Reproduction does not belong to women alone. Child rearing does not belong to women and their schools alone. Men need to be included in the raising of their children. ... We are not just beasts of burden assigned to work shit jobs and mail-in our child support checks.”

WHAT IS A MAN?

- A buffalo hunter on a plain where the buffalo are gone.
- A supporter of minority rights which has left him in the minority
- A poet who is chastised for wearing the wrong colored socks.
- A creature who could make his way in the world with a blanket and a pocket knife, who has been preyed upon to buy his family a 3-bedroom house and a garage full of toys that they take for granted, and he paid for with his life.

“Men protect weak females. It's in their memes. Women do not protect weak males – they despise them. Women are not solicitous providers for their men. They don't have any idea what that role would be; historically, biologically, sociologically, memetically, they aren't equipped for it. And that is why they will never lead this, or any other society, until they can show that they are responsive to the genuine needs of their men. Right now, we're upholding their dignity while they squat peeing in our shoes.”

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“George Gilder says, ‘It should be clear to any sentient observer that the worst parts of the ghetto present a rather typical pattern of female dominance, with women in charge of the families and male gangs away on the hunt. Workable in primitive societies with garden and game this system brings unremitting tragedy in the tenements and on the streets of our modern cities. ... In any disintegrating society the family is reduced to the lowest terms of mother and child.’”

“It seems to me the whole country has moved the way of ghettoization. Women feel they are entitled to something from the government and the job market. Men are increasingly being made obsolete; their only purpose is to perform the menial labor jobs women don't want to do.”

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

"Says Gilder, 'We pride ourselves on living in a nation of laws but few people recognize the limitations of the law. No law can prevail against the dissolution of the social connections and personal motivations that sustain a civilized polity. Carl Jung pointed out that society can resist epidemics of physical disease, but it is defenseless against diseases of the mind.'"

"We are moving to a system where children will be raised entirely by the state. Gilder calls this the emerging Matriarchy Without Mothers."

"There is more spirituality in most Blues songs than there is in the entire church oratory. 'Soul' is first and foremost male soul."

"Across cultures, the worry that boys will not grow up to be men is far more widespread than the worry that girls will not grow up to be women."

"Philip E. Slater in *The Pursuit of Loneliness* says, 'We seek entertainment, not God. The same man who chuckles and sentimentalizes over a happy-go-lucky film hero would view his real-life counterpart as a frivolous and irresponsible bum.'"

"In America we are all free to pursue exactly the same goals – house, car, career, family, retirement. How boring to live in such a one-dimensional society devoid of wandering gurus – who are arrested for loitering – and Gypsy wagoners – who can't get permits for their vehicles."

"On page 25 of the May 4, 1992 Newsweek we can see a photo of women carrying placards which state, 'Our Bodies Our Business'. And on page 41 of the same issue we can see a lineup of delinquent dads arrested for non-payment of child support."

"In a public lecture in Seattle, Washington Margaret Mead suggested that American men had been so effectively domesticated by their women that they had too little time and too little energy to engage in the national and communal tasks which needed doing – including the initiation of young men."

"All the young men in this country are alienated. Alienated from society. Alienated from themselves. And how has the machine of civilization responded? By creating the 'information revolution' – yet another computerized, feminized attempt to solve the problem by shoveling on more information. ... Dad's either at work or kicked out of the house."

"Psychotherapists have been lying to us for 100 years. They tell us we are born without an ego and need to spend our lives building it up. For them empowerment is a matter of bolstering the ego, building self-esteem. This is straight-on feminist, materialist philosophy and indeed this is the diametric opposite of the truth."

"Modern media can most politely be described as a 'celebrity suck-off'. Let's get some famous person up here to tell an anecdote about what happened on a film set in Europe or something their daughter did. This is criminal misuse of our airwaves and our print space. Playboy magazine is notable for having the worst writing by the best authors around. If some literary light has something laying around under his bed he sends it to Playboy. Why not go out there and find some of the best writing by the least known authors? Don't tell me you don't have the time. You don't have the brains. You don't care."

"Says Robert Bly, 'Women want a tractable man, if they want one at all; the church wants a tamed man, the university wants a domesticated man, the corporation wants subservient men.'"

"This is entirely a woman's world we live in. That's why they want the political accolades. That's why they want the recognition. They already run the whole show and now they just want us to formally acknowledge the fact."

"You can almost take it as a rule of thumb that whatever a woman says she is feeling, she is not feeling. This is not caring and sharing. We never know what they feel because they just lie about it. They lie to themselves, and in doing so, they lie to us."

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"Women turn emotions on and off like tap water. A woman can scream at her husband an hour after dinner and send him off to get drunk, watching TV in his room – then be ready to 'give him some sex' a half hour later. These digital emotions belie how shallow the feelings are to begin with, and constitute a daily variety of emotional abuse."

"This is America. It is so entirely feminine it baffles people all over the rest of the world and it is killing us off at an alarming rate. We fought and died to create this? Amazing."

"No matter which of society's goals a man has pursued it is never satisfying because, essentially, it is a materialistic, feminist-approved goal; for if it wasn't, he would never have gotten anywhere performing it."

"Men were created to counter, to offset, to compensate for female memes; and we can only do that by drawing a line in the sand and asserting our position. That is done by holding your palm out in front of you and saying, 'You can do what you want with your own life, but you will not invade my mind, or my children's minds, past this point.'"

"All this propaganda we get about how happy and free we are here [in the U.S.] is a lot of whistling up your wazoo. Other people in other countries are not chained like dogs to 25-year mortgages."

"We have organized ourselves right out of being able to provide basic shelter. Everyone has to be upper middle class, or there's no room for them. You are totally free to pay rent to somebody and, in two years, pay them what it would cost to build your own place. So what if your hand-built, third-world house would be small? It would be yours and it would be paid for! We don't even remember what freedom means anymore. It means: freedom from paying a goddamned mortgage."

"What has feminized American society made us into? Idiots. We make money during the week to meet our mortgage payments and then spend the weekend mowing the lawn and fixing the gutters. Idiots."

"Says Rohr, the feminized corporate male cannot do what he believes is right because he's not even sure what he believes in. What's worse, if he ever figured out what he believed in he'd quit his job today. Or if he actually acted on what he believed in he'd get fired."

"Men speak three and a half times fewer words than women and consequently a greater portion of their communication is done through gesture and nuance and body language that is beyond the scope of female apprehension."

"It's clear to me that anger is what wrote this book. Without that passion, that depth of feeling, I wouldn't have dropped everything I was doing for two years to research these gender topics. So it was a good thing. That anger. And in a big way my life and my writing have been about living with and defusing anger and resentments. Without some spiritual tools to dampen the dynamite, my brains would have blown out my ears long ago."

"It is important to remember that each year over 97% of all husbands do not resort to violence in their relationships. Considering the sheer amount of verbal abuse we withstand that statistic amazes me."

"When too much emphasis is put on the purchase and possession of objects too many people suffer. Shopping is evil. But you won't hear women or corporations say that."

"There are courses taught by human relations consultants called 'Marrying Up' and 'Marrying Money'. Men are welcome to attend but the instructor warns the lessons will not be applicable to them."

"I do not know a single man who goes into a relationship with the idea of changing the woman; I do not know a single woman who goes into a relationship without the idea of changing the man. She still wants to be saved. She will train him to save her."

"Men need mothers' permission to turn boys into men, and that permission is not forthcoming in our society. In our feminized

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

legal climate the male initiators would be thrown in jail if they attempted to perform this ritual service without the permission of the mothers.”

“All the things that I knew in my youth to be superficial and a waste of time became the norm and benchmark of our family aspirations during 15 years of marriage.”

“My future-former wife once flew into a rage that I wasn't being paid enough. She cut me off sexually and made my life miserable until I took her advice and fired my salesman. Within two weeks my business was ruined.”

“Women are being consumed by their own consumption. They've become wage-slaves in their own corporate fantasia. Women are being manipulated by their own manipulations.”

“A family with two full-time working parents does not function as a family. Something is missing. The family is missing. The modern American family is a pathological joke that will not endure.”

“Our educational system – the corporate job-training it has devolved into – and most of the jobs in modern society – are hopelessly feminine. The soul-scarring and deep resentment this causes in men is almost beyond calculation.”

“Recently a guy in Iowa was told that the U.S. economy created 280,000 jobs in the last quarter. He said, ‘I know. My wife and I have four of them.’”

“Cities are feminine. Nature is masculine. Corporations are female. Government is female. God is male.”

“It should be one of the stipulations of receiving Social Security that each old man has to spend three hours a week with some kid from a broken home.”

“In Hawaii, the kids call every adult male ‘uncle’ and every adult female ‘auntie’. The beauty of this is that every adult feels in-

volved and responsible for the health and worldview and good sense of every child.”

“Do I hate women? Not at all. I don't hate tigers, and I don't hate women. But I'm putting myself in extreme danger if I don't understand a tiger's nature or a woman's nature. Yes, extreme danger. This is no game any more. Feminism isn't cute. Femaleness is rotting people's souls.”

“Feminists are not the problem, they're just trying to get due credit for 8000 years of women manipulating human civilization.”

“All the things women blame on men are the things women put in men.”

“Until we recognize that war is caused by female materialistic greed, we don't have a chance of ending it.”

“If American culture were a real culture, it would provide some sort of initiation rituals to bring young men into the company of revered elders.”

“The United States is a ‘new’ country. In fact, it hasn't really become a country yet, it's just an idea. We have no culture other than the culture of buying things and talking about freedom.”

“The female's initiation is her wedding. The groom should burn the bride's wedding gown at the ceremony to demonstrate to her that her girlhood is over. This is real. This is marriage. This is the death of the little girl ego.”

“James Joyce said that all art which creates desire is pornographic. Our media, our advertising, are pure pornography.”

“The New Male Manifesto is easy to remember. It goes like this: LET THEM FIX THEIR OWN TOILETS!”

“Women obey rules and regulations. Men obey principles.”

“Always remember to be grateful. And always remember: ETERNITY IS NOW.”¹⁴⁰

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"The Manual of Love" (n.d.)

1) Don't assume a woman will initiate contact with you just because she finds you interesting. Any such contact would involve a conscious act on her part, involving the pain and disappointment associated with such acts, and this has historically proven to be too much to expect of women.

2) Treat a woman's feelings and thoughts as so trivial as to be non-existent. Women experience this as "being treated like a woman". You must be the one to initiate contact with her precisely because her feelings and thoughts *are* trivial. If she is dating another man tell her that he is useless and is no match for yourself. Tell her that she must have had a lapse of judgment.

3) Be subtle. Say one thing, but do another. A woman can perceive any kind of a lie as subtle, so this will make you seem more interesting.

4) Act like you have no pride in yourself. Work out, dress well, and be popular. These are signs to a woman that you are without morals and that you want a woman and are a serious contender.

5) Don't think of anything except sex in the first place and don't be too choosy. You need to go through quantity to find quality. You have nothing to lose except your pride and pride is only for losers.

Importantly if you show that you have high standards this will alienate women, because they know deep down that they are no different to all other women. If you have loved many women then any individual woman will feel as though you love her personally.

6) Behave like you find all women attractive and that all women find you attractive. Because a woman doesn't think for herself she will only find you of value if she thinks other women find you to be of value.

7) Act like you know what you are doing and use the time honoured ways of humiliation and diminution. Tell a woman that her dress is plain but her hair looks wonderful. Tell her that you're going to have to teach her how to dress and kiss properly.

8) When in doubt - make the move. Ask her out, kiss her, touch her, gently pull her hand and guide her into your bedroom. Women are waiting for you to give them a life. If you find yourself wondering if you

should, chances are very good that she is wondering why you don't. This is a test of self-confidence that almost all women demand of men before they will take them seriously. If you think women have a mind of their own then women will think you are a fool.

9) Realize that rejection isn't that big a deal. If a woman rejects you it means no more than the wind wasn't blowing in the right direction at that particular time.

If you fear rejection you will make women feel as though they are actually making choices, and they will despise you for that. No woman wants to be made to feel that she could possibly make choices that have consequences.

Treat women like numbers. Proposition three women and you will get one acceptance. Women feel honoured if you treat them in this easy-going manner.

10) As far as women are concerned words are for romance and deception. So NEVER, EVER, ask a girl to kiss her, etc. Listen carefully to a woman, but never believe anything she says. Rather, interpret what she says according to what you know of her.

Women are physical rather than intellectual creatures, so rather than telling a woman you love her you should move your hand directly to her crotch.

11) Agree thoroughly with the goals of feminism - especially the central ones - whatever they happen to be at the time. In fact you should agree with what any woman has ever said on any subject. But whatever you do you should never change the way you actually treat women or you will be in danger of becoming a saint - and a saint is a joke as far as a woman is concerned. By all means tell a woman she is extremely intelligent and courageous, but be sure to treat her like she is no different to any other woman - with no will of her own and whose thoughts and feelings are totally inconsequential.

Never expect women to actively do anything at all, no matter how much they claim to want self-determination. Always remember: "Wait for a woman to come to you and you can always be sure of receiving an invitation to her wedding."¹⁴¹

“Humorous Bits and Pieces” (n.d.)

A man whose actions leave his wife speechless has really done something.

The argument you just won with your wife isn't over yet.

The best way to remember your wife's birthday is to forget it once!

Extravagance is buying whatever is of no earthly value to your wife.

A genius is any man who can adjust the thermostat to please his wife.

An angry Texas wife said to her husband, "You are being deliberately calm."

Most women don't buy life insurance - they marry it.

Some wives have such good memories that they can even remember things that never happened.

Listening to political speeches is a lot like listening to your wife - you know something is going on even though you're not paying much attention to it.

If you want your wife to listen to what you have to say, talk in your sleep.

The next war will be like a fight with your wife - impossible to win it or end it.

An exhaustive study of police records shows that no wife ever shot her husband while he was doing the dishes.

A wife will always forgive and forget - but she'll never let you forget that she forgave and forgot.

If a man's wife is his better half, and he marries twice, what then becomes of him?

Pretend to treat your wife as a rational creature. It may surprise her at first, but she'll appreciate it. On the other hand, she may burst out crying - thinking you're drunk again.

The one thing that proves you can't afford to support a wife is having one.

Many a man met his wife through a dating service - her mother!

Any man who doesn't know what his wife is thinking hasn't been listening.

It's foolish to worry about something beyond your control - such as your wife.

A yawn is nature's provision for making it possible for husbands to open their mouths.

One reason it's often difficult to coax men to go to church is that men aren't interested in what other men are wearing.

It is intuition that enables a woman to put two and two together and come up with any answer that suits her.

If you believe that a woman hasn't a mind of her own, you've never served on a jury.

All women don't nag. Some aren't married.

The man who said the art of conversation is dead never stood outside a tele-

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phone booth waiting for a woman to finish talking.

An optimist thinks the woman in the phone booth will be right out because he heard her say goodbye.

When a woman suffers in silence, the phone is probably out of order.

When a man answers the phone he reaches for a pencil; when a woman answers she reaches for a chair.

I haven't spoken to my wife for 18 months - I don't like to interrupt her.

If you want to make a woman nervous, just put her in a room with a hundred hats and no mirror.

A woman likes a man best who has a will of his own - made out in her name.

Women distrust men too much in general and not enough in particular.

Said a girl graduate, "Four years of college! And whom has it got me?"¹⁴²

"Chance Truths" (n.d.)

Valerie Solanas walked into the Factory, Warhol's studio, in 1968, pulled out a gun, and fired into the chest of America's most famous artist. Warhol never fully recovered and in 1987 died prematurely. Solanas had once been a member of his crowd, and had even appeared in his films. Neither jealous lover, nor disgruntled employee, Solanas was the founding member and front-line warrior for SCUM, The Society to Cut Up Men.

Solanas was abused as a child and put herself through college by working as a prostitute. She had a short career with her college newspaper, where she wrote columns arguing that females can reproduce without males and should do so. Solanas seems to have been quite gifted and studied psychology at an honors level. After graduation she headed for New York, where she turned tricks and slept on rooftops with her trusty typewriter at her side. She wrote plays and gave readings of her material in luncheonettes.

"Sex is the refuge of the mindless" proclaimed Solanas. And famous for his asexuality, the cultivated passive Warhol agreed with her. For publishing her manifesto she was prepared to make him head of SCUM's Male Auxiliary: "men who are working to eliminate themselves."

Warhol finds her an interesting, and perhaps even a kindred spirit, and she writes a play hoping that Warhol will produce it. When she handed the play to Warhol he

praised her typing ... but then the precious playscript (entitled *Up Your Ass*) got lost among the chaos at the Factory. This annoyance, along with the mocking she received from Warhol's acquaintances no doubt riled Solanas into taking violent action.

But someone as intense as Solanas was probably not overly compatible with a filmmaker who, to quote one description, made four-hour movies of "someone eating a mushroom", and in the end she shoots a ghost of a man, proving herself to be no more than a ghost herself.

Her SCUM manifesto was published shortly after the shooting and became a seminal text of the worldwide feminist movement that followed. Her life has been recently documented in the highly acclaimed film *I Shot Andy Warhol* by Mary Harron.

Though deranged, Solanas was outrageously lucid in her hostility, and arguably had a good sense of humour. The sheer energy of her ravings bring some very important truths to the surface, and these deserve to be taken seriously. However, because her ideas are mere ravings, they cannot rightly be called thoughts, and consequently not truths either. Intuitive insights, undeveloped and unplaced, remain just that. Any truth to be gleaned from her words must come from ourselves.

Solanas died of pneumonia in a welfare hotel in San Francisco in 1988.

EXCERPTS FROM THE SCUM MANIFESTO

- By Valerie Solanas -

*With brief and sporadic commentary by
Kevin Solway*

Life in this society being, at best, an utter bore and no aspect of society being at all relevant to women, there remains to civic-minded, responsible, thrill-seeking females only to overthrow the government, eliminate the money system, institute complete automation and destroy the male sex.

It is now technically possible to reproduce without the aid of males (or, for that matter, females) and to produce only females. We must begin immediately to do so. Retaining the male has not even the dubious purpose of reproduction. The male is a biological accident: the y(male) gene is an incomplete x(female) gene, that is, has an incomplete set of chromosomes. In other words, the male is an incomplete female, a walking abortion, aborted at the gene stage. To be male is to be deficient, emotionally limited; maleness is a deficiency disease and males are emotional cripples.

As emotions themselves are the symptoms of a crippling disease I think it is no great disadvantage to not have the full-blown disease.

The male is completely egocentric, trapped inside himself, incapable of empathizing or identifying with others, of love, friendship, affection or tenderness. He is a completely isolated unit, incapable of rapport with anyone. His responses are entirely visceral, not cerebral; his intelligence is a mere tool in the service of his drives and needs; he is incapable of mental passion, mental interaction; he can't relate to anything other than his own physical sensations. He is a half-dead, unresponsive lump, incapable of giving or receiving pleasure or happiness; consequently, he is at best an utter bore, an inoffensive blob, since only those capable of absorption in others can be charming. He is trapped in a twilight zone halfway between humans and apes, and is far worse off than the apes because, unlike the apes, he is capable of a large array of negative feelings - hate, jealousy,

contempt, disgust, guilt, shame, doubt - and, moreover, he is *aware* of what he is and isn't.

Yes, man is mostly ape, but is not awareness a good thing? Man has attempted to stand, and is stumbling - should he then lie down again?

Although completely physical, the male is unfit even for stud service. Even assuming mechanical proficiency, which few men have, he is, first of all, incapable of zestfully, lustfully, tearing off a piece, but is instead eaten up with guilt, shame, fear and insecurity, feelings rooted in male nature, which the most enlightened training can only minimize; second, the physical feeling he attains is next to nothing; and third, he is not empathizing with his partner, but is obsessed with how he's doing, turning in an A performance, doing a good plumbing job. To call a man an animal is to flatter him; he's a machine, a walking dildo. It's often said that men use women. Use them for what? Surely not pleasure.

The alternative to being able to feel shame is of course to be without shame.

Eaten up with guilt, shame, fears and insecurities and obtaining, if he's lucky, a barely perceptible physical feeling, the male is, nonetheless, obsessed with screwing; he'll swim a river of snot, wade nostril-deep through a mile of vomit, if he thinks there'll be a friendly pussy awaiting him. He'll screw a woman he despises, any snaggle-toothed hag, and furthermore, pay for the opportunity. Why? Relieving physical tension isn't the answer, as masturbation suffices for that. It's not ego satisfaction; that doesn't explain screwing corpses and babies.

Completely egocentric, unable to relate, empathize or identify, and filled with a vast, pervasive, diffuse sexuality, the male is psychically passive. He hates his passivity, so he projects it onto women, defines the male as active, then sets out to prove that he is ('prove he's a Man'). His main means of attempting to prove it is screwing (Big Man with a Big Dick tearing off a Big Piece). Since he's attempting to prove an error, he must 'prove'

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

it again and again. Screwing, then, is a desperate, compulsive attempt to prove he's not passive, not a woman; but he is passive and does want to be a woman.

Obviously he doesn't entirely want to be a woman, or he wouldn't go to so much trouble to prove he's a man.

Being an incomplete female, the male spends his life attempting to complete himself, to become female. He attempts to do this by constantly seeking out, fraternizing with and trying to live through and fuse with the female, and by claiming as his own all female characteristics - emotional strength and independence, forcefulness, dynamism, decisiveness, coolness, objectivity, assertiveness, courage, integrity, vitality, intensity, depth of character, grooviness etc. - and projecting onto women all male traits - vanity, frivolity, triviality, weakness, etc. It should be said, though, that the male has one glaring area of superiority over the female - public relations. (He has done a brilliant job of convincing millions of women that men are women and women are men.) ...

Considering that women are supposed to be superior to men with regard to assertiveness, objectivity, courage, integrity, and independence, it is mighty strange that women have not been able to overcome the reversed image of themselves imposed on them by their inferior oppressors. (Until now, of course)

... The male claim that females find fulfillment through motherhood and sexuality reflects what males think they'd find fulfilling if they were female.

It requires a masculine mind to understand the female mind, because the female mind is not self-conscious, not self aware. Everything true that has ever been written about women has been written by men.

Women, in other words, don't have penis envy; men have pussy envy. When the male accepts his passivity, defines himself as a woman (males as well as females think men are women and women are men), and becomes a transvestite he loses his desire to screw (or to do anything else, for that matter; he fulfills himself as a drag queen) and gets his cock chopped off. He then achieves a continuous diffuse sexual feeling from 'being

a woman.' Screwing is, for a man, a defense against his desire to be female. Sex is itself a sublimation. ...

Incapable of a positive state of happiness, which is the only thing that can justify one's existence, the male is, at best, relaxed, comfortable, neutral, and this condition is extremely short-lived, as boredom, a negative state, soon sets in; he is, therefore, doomed to an existence of suffering relieved only by occasional fleeting stretches of restfulness, which state he can only achieve at the expense of some female. The male is, by his very nature, a leech, an emotional parasite and, therefore, not ethically entitled to live, as no one has the right to live at someone else's expense.

Yes, men need to become fully masculine to escape the pain of being an incomplete woman. Only then will men have no sexual/emotional need of women.

Just as humans have a prior right to existence over dogs by virtue of being more highly evolved and having a superior consciousness, so women have a prior right to existence over men. The elimination of any male is, therefore, a righteous and good act, an act highly beneficial to women as well as an act of mercy.

However, this moral issue will eventually be rendered academic by the fact that the male is gradually eliminating himself. In addition to engaging in the time-honored and classical wars and race riots, men are more and more either becoming fags or are obliterating themselves through drugs. The female, whether she likes it or not, will eventually take complete charge, if for no other reason than that she will have to - the male, for practical purposes, won't exist. ...

Whether to continue to use females for reproduction or to reproduce in the laboratory will also become academic: what will happen when every female, twelve and over, is routinely taking the Pill and there are no longer any accidents? How many women will deliberately get or (if an accident) remain pregnant? No, Virginia, women don't just adore being brood mares, despite what the mass of robot, brainwashed women will say. When society consists of only the fully conscious the answer will be none. Should a certain percentage of women be set aside by force to

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

serve as brood mares for the species? Obviously, this will not do. The answer is laboratory reproduction of babies.

As for the issue of whether or not to continue to reproduce males, it doesn't follow that because the male, like disease, has always existed among us that he should continue to exist. When genetic control is possible - and it soon will be - it goes without saying that we should produce only whole, complete beings, not physical defects or deficiencies, including emotional deficiencies, such as maleness. Just as the deliberate production of blind people would be highly immoral, so would the deliberate production of emotional cripples.

Why produce even females? Why should there be future generations? What is their purpose? When aging and death are eliminated, why continue to reproduce? Why should we care what happens when we're dead? Why should we care that there is no younger generation to succeed us?

Eventually the natural course of events, of social evolution, will lead to total female control of the world and, subsequently, to the cessation of the production of males and, ultimately, to the cessation of the production of females.

But SCUM is impatient; SCUM is not consoled by the thought that future generations will thrive; SCUM wants to grab some thrilling living for itself. And, if a large majority of women were SCUM, they could acquire complete control of this country within a few weeks simply by withdrawing from the labor force, thereby paralyzing the entire nation. Additional measures, any one of which would be sufficient to completely disrupt the economy and everything else, would be for women to declare themselves off the money system, stop buying, just loot and simply refuse to obey all laws they don't care to obey. The police force, National Guard, Army, Navy and Marines combined couldn't squelch a rebellion of over half the population, particularly when it's made up of people they are utterly helpless without.

... In a sane society the male would trot along obediently after the female. The male is docile and easily led, easily subjected to the domination of any female who cares to dominate him. The male, in fact, wants desperately to be led by females, wants Mama in charge,

wants to abandon himself to her care. But this is not a sane society, and most women are not even dimly aware of where they're at in relation to men.

The conflict, therefore, is not between females and males, but between SCUM - dominant, secure, self-confident, nasty, violent, selfish, independent, proud, thrill-seeking, free-wheeling, arrogant females, who consider themselves fit to rule the universe, who have free-wheeled to the limits of this 'society' and are ready to wheel on to something far beyond what it has to offer - and nice, passive, accepting, 'cultivated,' polite, dignified, subdued, dependent, scared, mindless, insecure, approval-seeking Daddy's Girls, who can't cope with the unknown, who want to continue to wallow in the sewer that is, at least, familiar, who want to hang back with the apes, who feel secure only with Big Daddy standing by, with a big, strong man to lean on and with a fat, hairy face in the White House, who are too cowardly to face up to the hideous reality of what a man is, what Daddy is, who have cast their lot with the swine, who have adapted themselves to animalism, feel superficially comfortable with it and know no other way of 'life,' who have reduced their minds, thoughts and sights to the male level, who, lacking sense, imagination and wit can have value only in a male 'society,' who can have a place in the sun, or, rather, in the slime, only as soothers, ego boosters, relaxers and breeders, who are dismissed as inconsequents by other females, who project their deficiencies, their maleness, onto all females and see the female as a worm.

But SCUM is too impatient to wait for the de-brainwashing of millions of arseholes. Why should the swinging females continue to plod dismally along with the dull male ones? Why should the fates of the groovy and the creepy be intertwined? Why should the active and imaginative consult the passive and dull on social policy? Why should the independent be confined to the sewer along with the dependent who need Daddy to cling to?

A small handful of SCUM can take over the country within a year by systematically fucking up the system, selectively destroying property, and murder:

SCUM will become members of the unwork force, the fuck-up force; they will get

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

jobs of various kinds and unwork. For example, SCUM salesgirls will not charge for merchandise; SCUM telephone operators will not charge for calls; SCUM office and factory workers, in addition to fucking up their work, will secretly destroy equipment. SCUM will unwork at a job until fired, then get a new job to unwork at.

SCUM will forcibly relieve bus drivers, cab drivers and subway token sellers of their jobs and run buses and cabs and dispense free tokens to the public.

SCUM will destroy all useless and harmful objects - cars, store windows, 'Great Art,' etc.

Eventually SCUM will take over the airwaves - radio and TV networks - by forcibly relieving of their jobs all radio and TV employees who would impede SCUM's entry into the broadcasting studios.

SCUM will couple-bust - barge into mixed (male-female) couples, wherever they are, and bust them up.

SCUM will kill all men who are not in the Men's Auxiliary of SCUM. Men in the Men's Auxiliary are those men who are working diligently to eliminate themselves, men who, regardless of their motives, do good, men who are playing ball with SCUM. A few examples of the men in the Men's Auxiliary are: men who kill men; biological scientists who are working on constructive programs, as opposed to biological warfare; journalists, writers, editors, publishers and producers who disseminate and promote ideas that will lead to the achievement of SCUM's goals; faggots who, by their shimmering, flaming example, encourage other men to de-man themselves and thereby make themselves relatively inoffensive; ...

Being in the Men's Auxiliary is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for making SCUM's escape list; it's not enough to do good; to save their worthless arses men must also avoid evil. A few examples of the most obnoxious or harmful types are: rapists, politicians and all who are in their service (campaigners, members of political parties, etc.); lousy singers and musicians; Chairmen of Boards; Breadwinners; landlords; owners of greasy spoons and restaurants that play Muzak; 'Great Artists'; cheap pikers and welchers; cops; tycoons; scientists working on death and destruction programs or for

private industry (practically all scientists); liars and phonies; disc jockeys; ...

Both destruction and killing will be selective and discriminate. SCUM is against half-crazed, indiscriminate riots, with no clear objective in mind, and in which many of your own kind are picked off. SCUM will never instigate, encourage or participate in riots of any kind or any other form of indiscriminate destruction. SCUM will coolly, furtively, stalk its prey and quietly move in for the kill. Destruction will never be such as to block off routes needed for the transportation of food and other essential supplies, contaminate or cut off the water supply, block streets and traffic to the extent that ambulances can't get through or impede the functioning of hospitals.

SCUM will keep on destroying, looting, fucking-up and killing until the money-work system no longer exists and automation is completely instituted or until enough women co-operate with SCUM to make violence unnecessary to achieve these goals, that is, until enough women either unwork or quit work, start looting, leave men and refuse to obey all laws inappropriate to a truly civilized society. Many women will fall into line, but many others, who surrendered long ago to the enemy, who are so adapted to animalism, to maleness, that they like restrictions and restraints, don't know what to do with freedom, will continue to be toadies and doormats, just as peasants in rice paddies remain peasants in rice paddies as one regime topples another. A few of the more volatile will whimper and sulk and throw their toys and dishrags on the floor, but SCUM will continue to steamroller over them.

A completely automated society can be accomplished very simply and quickly once there is a public demand for it. The blueprints for it are already in existence, and its construction will only take a few weeks with millions of people working at it. Even though off the money system, everyone will be most happy to pitch in and get the automated society built; it will mark the beginning of a fantastic new era, and there will be a celebration atmosphere accompanying the construction.

The elimination of money and the complete institution of automation are basic to all other SCUM reforms; without these two the others

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

can't take place; with them the others will take place very rapidly. The government will automatically collapse. With complete automation it will be possible for every woman to vote directly on every issue by means of an electronic voting machine in her house. Since the government is occupied almost entirely with regulating economic affairs and legislating against purely private matters, the elimination of money and with it the elimination of males who wish to legislate 'morality' will mean there will be practically no issues to vote on.

After the elimination of money there will be no further need to kill men; they will be stripped of the only power they have over psychologically independent females. They will be able to impose themselves only on the doormats, who like to be imposed on. The rest of the women will be busy solving the few remaining unsolved problems before planning their agenda for eternity and Utopia - completely revamping educational programs so that millions of women can be trained within a few months for high level intellectual work that now requires years of training (this can be done very easily once our educational goal is to educate and not to perpetuate an academic and intellectual elite);

solving the problems of disease and old age and death and completely redesigning our cities and living quarters. Many women will for a while continue to think they dig men, but as they become accustomed to female society and as they become absorbed in their projects, they will eventually come to see the utter uselessness and banality of the male.

The few remaining men can exist out their puny days dropped out on drugs or strutting around in drag or passively watching the high-powered female in action, fulfilling themselves as spectators, vicarious livers, or breeding in the cow pasture with the toadies, or they can go off to the nearest friendly suicide center where they will be quietly, quickly and painlessly gassed to death. ...

There is much truth to be found in Solanas' words - even though that truth is, as I say, probably entirely by chance, and more in the mind of the reader than anywhere else. Men have indeed only taken a few faltering steps into the realm of consciousness, and have by no means committed themselves to the task. So men are pretty much as cowardly and pathetic as Solanas says they are.

But women have so far made no steps at all.¹⁴³

“Collaboration between the Sexes” (n.d.)

What follows is a collaborative essay turned-in by two English students, Rebecca and Gary, at an American University.

Today we will experiment with a new form called the tandem story. The process is simple. Each person will pair off with the person sitting to his or her immediate right. One of you will then write the first paragraph of a short story. The partner will read the first paragraph and then add another paragraph to the story. The first person will then add a third paragraph, and so on back and forth. Remember to reread what has been written each time in order to keep the story coherent. The story is over when both agree a conclusion has been reached.

Rebecca: “At first, Laurie couldn't decide which kind of tea she wanted. The camomile, which used to be her favorite for lazy evenings at home, now reminded her too much of Carl, who once said, in happier times, that he liked camomile. But she felt she must

now, at all costs, keep her mind off Carl. His possessiveness was suffocating, and if she thought about him too much her asthma started acting up again. So camomile was out of the question.”

Gary: “Meanwhile, Advance Sergeant Carl Harris, leader of the attack squadron now in orbit over Skylon 4, had more important things to think about than the neuroses of an air-headed asthmatic bimbo named Laurie with whom he had spent one sweaty night over a year ago. “A.S. Harris to Geostation 17,” he said into his transgalactic communicator. “Polar orbit established. No sign of resistance so far...” But before he could sign off a bluish particle beam flashed out of nowhere and blasted a hole through his ship's cargo bay. The jolt from the direct hit sent

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

him flying out of his seat and across the cockpit.”

Rebecca: “He bumped his head and died almost immediately, but not before he felt one last pang of regret for psychically brutalizing the one woman who had ever had feelings for him. Soon afterwards, Earth stopped its pointless hostilities towards the peaceful farmers of Skylon 4. ‘Congress Passes Law Permanently Abolishing War and Space Travel.’ Laurie read in her newspaper one morning. The news simultaneously excited her and bored her. She stared out the window, dreaming of her youth -- when the days had passed unhurriedly and carefree, with no newspapers to read, no television to distract her from her sense of innocent wonder at all the beautiful things around her. ‘Why must one lose one’s innocence to become a woman?’ she pondered wistfully.”

Gary: “Little did she know, but she had less than 10 seconds to live. Thousands of miles above the city, the Anu’udrian mothership launched the first of its lithium fusion missiles. The dim-witted wimpy peaceniks who pushed the Unilateral Aerospace Disarmament Treaty through Congress

had left Earth a defenseless target for the hostile alien empires who were determined to destroy the human race. Within two hours after the passage of the treaty the Anu’udrian ships were on course for Earth, carrying enough firepower to pulverize the entire planet. With no one to stop them, they swiftly initiated their diabolical plan. The lithium fusion missile entered the atmosphere unimpeded. The President, in his top-secret mobile submarine headquarters on the ocean floor off the coast of Guam, felt the inconceivably massive explosion which vaporized Laurie and 85 million other Americans. The President slammed his fist on the conference table. ‘We can’t allow this! I’m going to veto that treaty! Let’s blow ’em out of the sky!’”

Rebecca: “This is absurd. I refuse to continue this mockery of literature. My writing partner is a violent, chauvinistic, semi-literate adolescent.”

Gary: “Yeah? Well, you’re a self-centered tedious neurotic whose attempts at writing are the literary equivalent of Valium.”

Rebecca: “Asshole.”

Gary: “Bitch.”¹⁴⁴

THE THINKING MAN’S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

OTTO WEININGER ON THE INTERNET

If Otto Weininger continues to inspire genius through what he has left us then I will consider half my work already done. His book *Sex and Character* is one of the few masterpieces of modern times. In it, Weininger overflows with profound insight, deepest love, and awesome courage. To quote the eloquent author of an old book:

We have all come under the spell of Otto Weininger, even those of us who have never heard of him, for he was one of those geniuses whose ideas echo far beyond any sound that is made by their names...

Otto Weininger's extraordinary life culminated in the publication of his timeless work *Sex and Character*. Soon after the publication he went to Italy to await results. There appeared to be none, and during the next four months an intellectual malady, described by his friends as "a too grave sense of responsibility," became acute. On October 4, 1903, at the age of 23, he took his own life.

... "Sex & Character" began to sell. It ran through printing after printing. It was translated into innumerable languages, and in a few years his publishers could declare with no more than pardonable exaggeration that no scientific book in the whole history of books had ever a greater success.

"The man came as a meteor and disappeared as suddenly. It was only when he had passed that his ideas started to sparkle, electrifying the world. Some regarded him as a biologist, others as a psychologist, still others called him a mystic. Though generally considered a realist, he was at the same time strongly suspected of dealing in fantasies. He was praised for his invincible logic and attacked for his crusade against women. He was full of contradictions. His name became the signal for dispute and controversy in a thousand cities."

"Weininger's nature forced his mind on long expeditions into psychology, biology, literature, and philosophy, journeys from which he never returned. Dissatisfied with scientific research, discontent with his own restless nature, he went farther and farther along the paths of speculative thought until he was, at the end, quite alone."

"It would be hard to find another man who showed even in mild form the characteristics and the mental processes that Otto Weininger revealed in the extreme." - [Abrahamsen]¹⁴⁵

"My Views on Otto Weininger" (n.d.)

- By Kevin Solway -

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Although I have spent a good number of years thinking about Weininger, words do not come easily to mind when I try to explain him. I think his own book, *Sex and Character* is the best explanation of who and what Weininger is. Unlike the many commentators I don't believe there is any dangerously hidden or dark motivation behind Weininger's work (which includes his death) that requires any explanation other than what Weininger himself provides. It seems to me that Weininger had an excellent understanding of his own nature, of his own strengths and weaknesses, and that he concealed nothing of real importance either from himself or from others. With Weininger, what you see is what you get. Nietzsche speaks of such rare and great men in his *Zarathustra*:

So many a clever one had I found, that veiled his face and muddied his waters, that none might look through them and down into them.

But to him came the more clever unbelievers, the crackers of nuts: these fished out from him the best hidden fish! But the bright ones, the brave, the transparent - these I hold the wisest of the silent: for their bottom is so deep that even the clearest water betrayeth it not!

Such was Weininger, transparent to the core, yet unexplainable by ordinary human experience - wholly alien to academics and everyday social beings.

"The genius is not the product of his age, is not to be explained by it, and we do him no honour if we attempt to account for him by it", says Weininger. To understand men of genius we must ourselves enter into the pure and lofty regions of reason itself, into logic, into the absolute, and into genius.

Having myself come to an understanding of Weininger in the context of *reason*, that is to say *in the context of his actual thought* (a practice which seems to be unheard of in modern scholarship), I do not regard Weininger to be either misogynistic or anti-Semitic. I can vouch for Weininger's judgment on women, which I believe is excellently true, however my inexperience with Jewish people means that I am unqualified to either affirm or dispute Weininger's judgement of Jewish culture.

It is unfortunate that academics have seen fit to ignore the thrust of Weininger's work, which does not concern science or politics, but is of a religious and philosophic nature. Weininger's great contribution to human thought lies in his insights concerning the feminine/masculine nature of mind in all people - the fact that all human behavior is a function of active and passive behaviour - and in the way he related this notion to genius and spiritual enlightenment.

As to the reason for his suicide when he was twenty-three years of age, I believe there were a number of contributing factors. Primarily, Weininger was a perfectionist, and suffered too much through his faults to be able to

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live with them. Had he persisted a little longer he would probably have developed the wisdom and strength to accept his own faults, at the same time as continuing his serious work to eliminate them. As it was, Weininger's mental and spiritual development was simply too rapid to allow him to put down the roots which could have sustained him. On the other hand, through the sheer quality of his work Weininger will always be around, and will continue to grow.¹⁴⁶

“An Investigation into Academic Nothingness” (n.d.)

A discussion of the book “Wittgenstein Reads Weininger”

By Kevin Solway

This essay is in response to a particular academic book, but could have been a response to any of countless books typical of Western academic philosophy, or of the humanities in general. Thus the reader can appreciate the message of this essay without having read the actual book in question, since if the reader has read even one paragraph of Western academic philosophical drivel of any kind, they will have been more than sufficiently informed.

Upon reading “Wittgenstein reads Weininger”, a compilation of writings by various Western academic philosophers, I asked myself what impression it had left on my mind, and how I could express that. The answer immediately formed itself in my mind: “Nothing”.

There is no mistake. Indeed, from cover to cover, from one page to the next, and irrespective of author, the consistency is unmistakable. It is absolutely *nothing*. The theme is nothing, the execution is nothing, the intent, nothing. And there is absolutely nothing about the book that is not nothing.

For this reason “Wittgenstein reads Weininger” will only be of interest to the handful of Wittgenstein scholars, and then only grudgingly, since they already have more than enough of nothing to keep themselves occupied into the far future.

This all might sound unbelievable to some; for how could it be that such highly educated and handsomely paid professionals (who yet cry poor) conspire to produce a book that might as well have had all its pages left blank?

To illustrate how and why this happens, I will examine the actual “contents” of the book – remembering all the while, please note, that any expression I use describe this book, such as “having contents”, must necessarily be poetic only, since there is in fact nothing to be described, and no real contents at all.

And since the nothingness in question is precisely that spoken of by Otto Weininger when he says that people can indeed truly be nothing, and

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

enact nothing (specifically the criminal and the feminine-minded*), it will serve for us to examine this book from the perspective of Weininger's view. More specifically, I will examine how Weininger's ideas are represented in this book as a way of demonstrating the essential nothingness of the whole book, and by logical extension the essential nothingness of the whole of Western academic thought.

The Introductory Essay by David G. Stern and Béla Szabados

It turns out that Ludwig Wittgenstein regarded Otto Weininger to be a "great genius" and would often recommend Weininger's books to his students and friends. Wittgenstein studied and meditated on Weininger's work for the duration of his life and listed Weininger as one of the people who most influenced his thinking.

Yet in the introductory essay of the book, Stern and Szabados personally accuse Weininger of being a mere pop-psychologist, as well as a peddler of the most powerful prejudices of others, and guilty of "racism, homophobia, and sexism". These are all extremely serious and damning accusations to be making in the opening pages of a supposedly scholarly book, but the authors feel no need to provide any evidence or argument to support their accusations – accusations which can easily be shown to be entirely false. Presumably the authors feel that the opening volley of fire is sufficient character assassination to lay the foundation for the rest of the book – which involves the dismembering and abusing a corpse – a corpse unable to defend itself.

At this point the obvious question to ask is whether Stern and Szabados really *think* these things they have stated about Weininger, or whether they are in fact merely echoing or channelling the popular prejudices of others – for the reason of self-defense (so as not to offend anyone they personally consider to be significant) – or perhaps also to flatter others (to please those they consider significant).

In the course of this essay I will show why I believe the latter is the case, for the reason that there cannot be any thinking taking place.

The Essay by Béla Szabados

In his essay, Szabados makes the bold claim that Weininger makes "a priori and dogmatic generalizations about sexual, racial, and national characters". But true to the form so far displayed in this book, Szabados provides no evidence or argument whatsoever that Weininger's generalizations are either a priori or dogmatic. Rather, he dogmatically makes the claim, and expects us all to believe it.

* "Women have no existence and no essence; they are not, they are nothing." Weininger 1906, 286, 300 based on Weininger 1980, 383, 402

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

In fact, it is not hard to show that this claim made by Szabados is entirely false. Firstly, since Weininger's generalizations are based on personal observations, they therefore have an empirical basis, and are not "a priori". And secondly, since Weininger's generalizations are neither unwarranted, nor arrogant, being valid generalizations based on observable fact, it follows that they are not dogmatic. As we might expect, it is Szabados himself who is making dogmatic and even "a priori" generalizations about Weininger.

But as we shall see, it is perfectly normal for academics to damn their victims of the very crimes which they habitually commit themselves – and which they commit in the normal course of their professional duty to "fill the space" – a duty which has resulted in the publication of the book under question.

Szabados continues with the perplexing statement that "Weininger's desire to transcend our animality and his antifeminism are indeed prejudices ..."

The desire to transcend animality is ... a *prejudice* ... ? Prejudiced against animals no doubt! ... In much the same way that the desire to live a truthful life would indicate a "prejudice" against the lying and criminal life?

And too, "antifeminist" is a very strange criticism of Weininger, who was arguably one of the greatest feminists of all time – there being probably no person in all history who has argued so strongly for the right of every woman to independence and self-determination, or argued so persuasively for her true freedom from the dictates of both men and other women.

True freedom must always begin with *truth*, and that is where Weininger starts. No amount of *wishing* equality will ever make it so.

Continuing, Szabados then accuses Weininger of "essentialism" – or, to paraphrase, "applying an ideal type in an extreme and inappropriate manner in every nook and cranny of our lives." But again, Szabados conveniently fails to provide *any* argument or evidence that Weininger does this.

For the fact is, that Weininger does not do this. While Weininger does indeed apply his types (eg, M and F, signifying masculine and feminine, or conscious and unconscious characteristics) extremely, and in every nook and cranny of our lives, *he does so perfectly appropriately*. If it were the case that Weininger was *stuck* on particular ideal types which were not fruitful, and to the exclusion of other possible types which might be more fruitful, then perhaps we could criticize his method as "inappropriate". But this is not the case. The evidence of Weininger's writings indicate that he is exceptionally flexible in his use of types, and that he uses those types only so far as they prove true and useful.

Later on, Szabados makes mention of "Weininger's inconsistencies", and claims that Weininger's thoughts result in "stereotype, prejudice, and

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

absurdity". But here again, in accordance with all his fellow scholars, he never mentions what he thinks these inconsistencies, prejudices, and absurdities might be. Szabados does not argue a case, but rather, states his claims as facts that are beyond question. The end result of all these unsupported accusations is essentially no more than undignified mud-slinging.

The Essay by Allan Janik

Allan Janik took twenty-six pages of dense text to say, essentially, that Wittgenstein saw things in a different way to some other people, and may have been inspired, in part, by Weininger's seeing things in a different way.

Janik's long essay does not bear further mention than this.

The Essay by Steven Burns

In his essay, Steven Burns accuses Weininger of "essentializing and dichotomizing", but, like the others, doesn't put forward any argument to support his case – which makes any response very difficult. Is Weininger wrong to "dichotomize" between true and false? Is he wrong to dichotomize between consciousness and unconsciousness? Clearly he is not wrong to do so.

Burns objects to what he calls "Victorian dualisms" – which we can only presume to mean something like "unreasonably simplistic categories" – but he fails to give any specific examples of dualisms from Weininger's work that he believes to be "Victorian".

Burns does give some examples of Weininger's dualisms which don't seem to meet with his approval, but he doesn't specify whether he believes them to be "Victorian" or not. For example, Burns says that he doesn't like Weininger forever saying that things are either "A or not-A, or some mixture of the two".

We are of course left to presume that Burns thinks that this kind of categorizing oversimplifies matters in a way that is not useful. But Burns mounts no case for such a contention.

Burns says, "Wittgenstein showed us how many other paths there are than just two" – *implying* that Weininger was narrow-minded and inflexible with his use of dualisms. But if that criticism is correct, then we ought to be able to find dualisms in Weininger that are either wrong or not useful. Can we do it?

Let's look at Weininger's famous theme: the degree of consciousness or unconsciousness in a person (or in other words, the degree to which a person is "M"ale or "F"emale). Is there a third category possible, beside consciousness and unconsciousness (and all grades in between)? No, there is no third category possible. So Weininger's dualism is perfectly valid,

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

and useful too. If Burns wishes to complain, then let him provide additional categories.

Likewise, if Burns thinks there is a problem with Weininger's dividing people into "seekers" and "priests" (i.e., seekers of wisdom, and possessors of wisdom), or dividing people into "sadists" and "masochists" (dualists and non-dualists), then Burns is not providing any argument which would demonstrate any problem.

With regards to the division of people into seekers and knowers of wisdom, it could *possibly* be argued that it is a faulty division since there are people who are so foolish that they neither have wisdom, yet nor do they seek it (... academic philosophers come readily to mind). But it could be said of such people that even they seek wisdom at least to some small degree – even if they are not aware of this fact themselves. This would make the division a valid one. And what is more, and importantly, Weininger does not say that this particular division necessarily applies to literally *all* people. Rather, Weininger applies his division only to a select group of people. What would be the point of strictly applying this division to a person who had the mentality of a vegetable? Even further, Weininger is clearly applying this division of people into "seekers" and "priests" *not* as some kind of final and absolute solution to all problems, but only as a kind of experimental application of thought that is useful only so far as it produces, or spins-off, helpful results, when used in a certain context.

I suspect that Burns is not allowing Weininger the right to his own meaning for his own terms and modes of thought. Instead, Burns is projecting his own preferred meanings onto Weininger's words, and resulting in absurdities.

Burns seems to want to make a clown of Weininger – a clown who makes simple errors of logic and observation. For example, it would be clownish indeed for someone to suggest that we should divide all people into, say, "bakers" and "plumbers" – since it is obvious that many people are neither bakers nor plumbers. Yet this is indeed the kind of error Burns attributes to Weininger.

In fact Weininger, who, according to Abrahamsen "was praised for his invincible logic", simply does not present as someone who would make such spurious divisions. Rather, I suspect that the scholars are simply finding fault with tiny details of semantics – of their own creation – in order to dispose of someone they find both disturbing and a menace.

The Essay by Joachim Schulte

Joachim Shulte is to be commended for two things; firstly, for writing in fairly readable English, and secondly for suggesting that there might be

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

another way of reading Weininger's work than the way Western scholars have traditionally done.

Given the deep irony and humour in Weininger's work, Schulte says that he finds it "hard to understand why Weininger is generally taken to be nothing but a solemn, zealous and bigoted stickler for nasty and stupid principles." But if Schulte had any kind of understanding of the mind of the typical Western academic scholar then he wouldn't be so puzzled.

Towards the end of his essay Schulte accuses Weininger of being dated and "time bound" – which are things that no great genius ever is. And, like all the others, Schulte conveniently doesn't provide any evidence or argument for his claim. In doing so, Schulte has similarly made himself a small target through use of the "hit and run" method. That is, he slings the mud, inflicting the damage, but then provides no details that you can pursue for reparation.

Despite that major fault, Schulte's essay is probably the only one in this book that has elements that are moderately reasonable and human.

The Essay by Daniel Steuer

Steuer does a serviceable job of summarizing a few of Weininger's ideas, but falls down badly where he says, "Let us call the Weininger a priori absolute, and ascribe the concept of a relative a priori to Wittgenstein." Since the fact is that Weininger's a priori is just as relative as is Wittgenstein's, and indeed is "established through the choice of a standard of comparison from within the empirical". For example, Weininger's continuum from consciousness (M) to unconsciousness (F), is a standard of comparison established out of empirical observations. It is notable that Steuer does not provide *any* examples of a dualism from Weininger that he would call "absolute a priori".

Steuer illustrates an "absolute a priori" when he describes an a priori dividing of dramatic space into only comedy and tragedy. And he then describes the obvious shortcomings of this division. As Wittgenstein says, "They are two of many possible types of drama, and they just seemed to be the only possible ones for a particular – and past – culture."

But Steuer makes the serious error of thinking that this illustration has something to do with Weininger, since Weininger doesn't divide empirical spaces up in such a way, and Steuer doesn't make any effort to show that he does.

To the contrary, it seems that Steuer is himself trying to establish an absolute a priori difference – i.e., one not based on observable facts – between Weininger and Wittgenstein on this issue.

Steuer makes an even more serious error when he disputes Weininger's use of the law of identity (i.e., $A=A$), saying that "Wittgenstein negates these principles." Unfortunately, the only way a person can negate any-

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

thing is by using the law of identity, making Steuer's point ridiculously meaningless.

Finally, Steuer thinks he is saying something wise when he says "The philosopher should behave like one of Weininger's criminals: he should adapt to any environment, to any system." Yet this is *precisely* why Weininger says that academic philosophers are indeed criminals – because instead of adapting themselves to the *one truth of the Universe*, they instead adapt themselves to countless dreamworlds that are all disconnected from reality. In sharp contrast, the genius of which Weininger speaks – the *true* philosopher – is able to effortlessly adapt to all environments, since they are all part, all facets of his environment.

Steuer wins points for mentioning Kierkegaard's name, and thereby injecting a faint hint of humanity, but nothing else can be said in favour of his essay.

The Essay by David G. Stern

Stern discusses some of what Weininger has written about what animals symbolize. In it, he comes to the realization that "‘Humanity’ turns out to mean those very few people who can live up to Weininger's inhuman ideals of denying everything in this world in order to strive for one's own salvation, a salvation that turns on dwelling on the dangers of damnation."

Stern provides no reference for this claim, and it is clear that he has simply made it up. Firstly, Weininger's ideals are not inhuman, but are in fact truly human; secondly, nowhere does Weininger say that the genius denies everything in this world. Rather, the genius only denies what is *false* in this world. And thirdly, Weininger certainly does not argue that salvation turns on "dwelling on the dangers of damnation".

This last point is easily revealed, since if it were truly the case that Weininger spent his short time on earth dwelling on the dangers of damnation, then he wouldn't have produced two timeless, masterpiece works by the age of twenty-three. David G. Stern should look down at his own feet instead of wasting his time nit-picking for faults in others.

Next, Stern makes the strange claim that Weininger's ideals are not presented as the deliverances of Reason. Yet that is *precisely* how all of Weininger's ideas are presented. Reason is the whole of Weininger, and is what he sacrificed himself for. It would be very unusual indeed for someone who was "praised for his invincible logic" (Abrahamsen) to not present his ideas as deliverances of Reason.

And while Weininger writes about what he believes certain animals *symbolize* (necessarily for himself at least, and in a certain context), Stern, very weirdly, goes on a lengthy discussion about whether we can know what is truly going on in the mind of animals – a discussion that has

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

nothing whatsoever to do with Weininger, yet is presented as though it is somehow relevant.

For example, Weininger says that the dog symbolizes the criminal. But Stern, unbelievably, understands this to mean that Weininger holds the dog to be really criminal, and that the dog thinks criminally, and is thus truly evil! This is too crazy for words.

According to Stern, Weininger wants us to “understand animals *entirely* [my italics] in terms of the extent to which they express characteristically human concerns”. Once again, this is entirely fanciful on Stern’s part, and is blatantly made-up.

In fact Weininger very wisely says nothing about what animals or plants are really thinking – or even if they are thinking at all – which makes Stern’s whole case concerning “Weiningerian anthropocentrism” a pitiful non-event.

The aim of the book under discussion, i.e., “Wittgenstein reads Weininger”, was supposedly to try and shed light on why Wittgenstein listed Weininger as one of his main influences, and, indeed, why he referred to Weininger as a “great genius”. It also sought to offer an explanation as to why Wittgenstein said that, to paraphrase, “if one negates the whole of Weininger’s book, it says an important truth”.

As for the former, it is not hard to see Weininger’s influence on Wittgenstein and why Wittgenstein should praise him as a great genius. But the question as to why Wittgenstein wished to negate the whole of Weininger’s masterpiece work (“Sex and Character”) was not dealt with at all convincingly in this book.

Wittgenstein doesn’t give us much information to go on, but I propose the following simple explanation for the “negation”:

Wittgenstein lost three of his brothers to suicide. And Otto Weininger too, whom Wittgenstein perhaps thought of as a kind of brother, killed himself shortly after having written “Sex and Character”. Throughout his life Wittgenstein was to be haunted by thoughts of suicide.

I suggest, then, that the whole issue of suicide was of huge significance to Wittgenstein, and was an issue to which he was particularly sensitive. He likely perceived a way of thinking in Weininger’s book – an extreme and uncompromising way of thinking – which, it seemed to him, led to an untimely death – and it was especially *this* which he felt the need to “negate”. Therefore it was not for any tight logical reason that Wittgenstein talked about “negating” Weininger’s book, but rather it was for largely personal and emotional reasons – with his negating serving him perhaps in the manner of a small crucifix which might ward off some kind of demon.

Conclusion

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

When critiquing the work of academic philosophers, it is almost impossible to know what to do, for it is as though one were presented with a cloud of dense fog, and are invited to deal with it.

One is first struck with the obvious problem that it is impossible to tell whether the academic philosopher believes anything of what he writes, or whether one is expected to take it as some kind of a game or a joke. The content of their ideas is so fabricated, so artificial, having no relation whatsoever to the subject material, and so completely conforming with the latest fashions in academic thought, that one strongly suspects that they don't believe a word of what they write, but are instead simply contributing, almost cynically, to the mass of what academic philosophers have done before – not unlike the children's game of "sticks" where many small sticks are awkwardly and precariously balanced on each other to form a pile, until eventually the whole lot collapses under its own weight and you start again. Indeed it is not even part of the job description of an academic philosopher that they *believe* anything they say – so it is probably wrong to even expect it of them.

The academic philosopher too commonly seems to be mocking his own profession through some kind of perverse self-parody – perhaps as a form of confession to ease the burden of guilt for the crime.

But if academic philosophers don't believe anything they say, or if it is all in jest, and a joke, then what do they really say?

Nothing at all.

And that is precisely what we are faced with in this book.

Not once in this book did I read the words "I don't know". If the book contained these simple words, then it might have at least contained *something* – and thus something respectable. For, it is a regrettable fact that none of the authors who contributed to this book were qualified to pass comment on Weininger's work, and for that reason should have either remained silent, or gracefully and politely declined with an honourable "I don't know". Instead, each author feels a duty to fabricate meaningless opinions, completely disregarding the subject material, and giving the impression that the subject material is somehow *immaterial*.

On the surface this book might appear more intelligent than previous modern academic works about Weininger, since it does go so far as to suggest, though without any conviction, that an actual reading of Weininger's work might be useful to a discussion of it. Yet its pages still fail to muster up an actual thought. The recognition of deep humour in Weininger's work by Joachim Schulte was the nearest this book came to that lofty achievement.

In summary, "Wittgenstein reads Weininger" shows what happens when people are paid to simply show up. And it shows what happens when

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

scholars are allowed to judge the worth of their own work. For it happens that when the quality of thought of the average academic philosopher is appallingly low, that level becomes the professional standard. A sheer absence of thought, and even more, a complete absence of respect for the thought of others, becomes the highly paid craft of the Professor.¹⁴⁷

“Otto Weininger on the Nature of Comedy” (n.d.)

“The essence of comedy seems to me to be an undue stressing of the empirical, thereby to reveal its unimportance. Everything realised is in principle laughable, and comedy bases itself on this, and so is the counterpart of the erotic. While the latter seeks to go from the bounded to the unbounded, comedy lowers itself to the bounded, pushing it alone to centrestage, and exposing it, by viewing it from all angles. The comedian has no need to travel; only he has the sense and tendency to the minor; his kingdom is neither sea nor mountain range, his home is the flatlands. He thus has a great fondness for idylls and delves into every individual particular: but always only to expose his incongruity with the thing in itself. He mocks the immanent by separating it completely from the transcendent, indeed no more giving the latter a name. Wit seeks contradiction within phenomena, comedy injures it the most by representing it as a self-contained whole; both show everything that is possible, and thereby most profoundly compromise the experiential. Tragedy, by contrast, represents what for all time is impossible, and so tragedy and comedy, each in their own way, refute the empirical, although they appear to be the opposite of each other...” - Translated and posted by Martin Dudaniec¹⁴⁸

“Precious Pieces about Weininger” (n.d.)

- Mostly gleaned from *Sex, Science, and Self in Imperial Vienna*,
a Doctoral dissertation by Chandak Sengoopta,
Johns Hopkins University, 1996

- Otto was a brilliant student in high school (Gymnasium), exhibiting a special flair for the humanities. Later, he also developed a keen interest in the natural sciences and mathematics. He possessed his parents' talent for languages and at eighteen, apart from German, knew Latin and Greek, spoke French, English, and Italian well, and was fluent in Spanish and Norwegian. At age sixteen, he wrote an etymological essay on certain Greek adjectives found only in Homer and attempted unsuccessfully to publish it in a leading philological journal of the time. He was not, however, a model schoolboy. He frequently disturbed classroom teaching and followed his own inclinations in his studies, rarely paying heed to his teachers. "My pleasure in 'hell-raising' in class is my *pleasure in chaos*," Weininger noted in his pocket notebook in 1903.
- After graduating from high school in 1898, Otto enrolled in the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Vienna, ignoring his father's wish that he study languages. Otto also joined the Philosophical Society of the university, which organized weekly lectures on diverse scholarly (and not just narrowly philosophical) subjects.

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

- A deeply serious young man, Weininger derived his greatest pleasure from discussion of the most difficult philosophical subjects with his friends. His friend Hermann Swoboda wrote: "He was quite indefatigable as he brought up question after question during our frequent small parties, which lasted late into the night or into the early morning. Abstract regions, from which others would turn away with a cold shiver, were his real home. He was, in short, a passionate thinker, the prototype of a thinker." (H. Swoboda, *Otto Weiningers Tod*, Vienna: Deuticke, 1911, pp. 6-7.)
- Weininger had little obvious interest in current events: "I never saw him reading a newspaper", Swoboda recalled. Another friend, Emil Lucka, observed that happiness was foreign to Weininger's nature, although he did enjoy the beauty of nature and the music of the great composers. Swoboda, however, denied this, saying that Weininger, initially, was no stranger to happiness. It was only later that his personality changed.
- In the autumn of 1901, Weininger approached Sigmund Freud with an outline for *Sex and Character*. Seemingly unimpressed by Weininger's arguments, Freud refused to recommend publication, and advised Weininger to spend "ten years" gathering empirical evidence for his assertions. "The world", Freud said, "wants evidence, not thoughts". Weininger retorted that he would prefer to write ten other books in the next ten years.
Weininger once said in a letter to Swoboda: "How could I possibly *prove* facts. Facts can only be indicated."
What Freud didn't tell Weininger was that he himself planning to publish on the subject of bisexuality.
- Shortly after the publication of his book Weininger said to a friend "There are three possibilities for me - the gallows, suicide, or a future so brilliant that I don't dare to think of it".
- Sexologist Ivan Bloch noted that the urge to affirm a "masculine culture" was leading even some heterosexual men to renounce women in horror. Such people, according to Bloch, almost belonged to a "fourth sex". He saw the philosophy of Schopenhauer as the intellectual fountainhead of this pathological fear of the feminine, and the work of August Strindberg and Otto Weininger as its most full-blown expressions.
- Despite the unpleasant associations Weininger's name must have had for him and despite his own distaste for Weininger's theories, Freud always acknowledged Weininger's gifts. After his suicide, Freud described him as a "slender, grown-up youth with grave features and a veiled, quite beautiful look in his eyes; I could not help feeling that I stood in front of a personality with a touch of the genius".
- The metaphysics of sexual love and feminine psychology, observed Richard Nordhausen in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, had never been treated with such monstrous brutality or acuity as in Weininger's book. "But", he said, "one must must, must read this book".
- George Worth, in his book *Ways to Love* (1940) said that *Sex and Character* was "an unparalleled crime against humanity".
- August Strindberg contributed twice to *Die Fackel's* discussion of Weininger. The first was a letter of July 1903 from Strindberg to his German translator Emil Schering. Here Strindberg informed Schering that Weininger had sent him a copy of *Sex and Character*, which Strindberg had found to be a "frightening" book that had "probably solved the hardest of all problems". To Weininger himself, Strindberg sent a postcard offering heartfelt thanks for at last solving the "Woman Problem". Strindberg's letters were followed by his obituary of Weininger. In this deeply-felt tribute, Strindberg said that only the mentally retarded would doubt the superiority of the male sex over the female: all the spiritual and material riches of humanity had been created by males. Woman's love for man, Strindberg opined, was "50% animal heat and 50% hate". Woman was negative and passive, whereas man was positive and

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

active. Otto Weininger had rediscovered and reported this "well-known secret" in his "virile" book. This discovery of the "essence and nature of woman", Strindberg surmised, had cost Weininger his life.

- The reviewer for the *Deutsches Volksblatt* (identified only as Dr. H. F.) was less enthusiastic and censured Weininger for drawing untenable conclusions. "The rose had its thorns but was still the empress of flowers", he remarked. Women, too, for all their flaws, were not the amoral, soulless beings described in Weininger's treatise. After providing a fairly comprehensive overview of the argument of *Sex and Character*, the reviewer concluded: "Only prophets and philosophers can be so gruesome".
- A very early notice in the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* described *Sex and Character* as "very stimulating, educational and despite everything, full of truths". Another anonymous reviewer in the *Weiner Allgemeine Zeitung* described the book as "one of the most noteworthy and most original books ever written."
- The European literary intelligentsia of the fin de siècle did not always agree with Weininger but they treated *Sex and Character* with great respect. Ford Madox Ford described the English translation of the work as "the most important, as it is the most singular, of contributions to the modern literature on the sex question". Ford reminisced that around 1906, in the men's clubs of England and in the cafés of France and Germany -- " . . . one began to hear singular mutterings amongst men . . . The idea was that a new gospel had appeared. I remember sitting with a table full of overbearing intellectuals in that year, and they at once began to talk -- about Weininger. It gave me a singular feeling because they all talked under their breaths."
- Weininger's literary influence was not confined to Central Europe. In the United States, the poet William Carlos Williams decided to marry a woman he did not love because he had learned

from *Sex and Character* that sexual affinity, rather than love, was the most important bond between Man and Woman. Also influenced by Weininger's conviction that a man with sufficient power of will could develop into a genius, Williams believed that it was only his weakness for women that prevented him from attaining genius.

In her well-known work, *The Female Eunuch*, the feminist scholar Germaine Greer describes *Sex and Character* as "a remarkably rigorous and committed book by a mere boy". Greer says that "the most chastening reflection is that Weininger was simply describing what he saw in female behavior around him . . . All the moral deficiencies Weininger detected masqueraded in Victorian society as virtues. Weininger is to be credited with describing them properly".

Greer then agrees with Weininger's contentions on the illogicality and emotionality of Woman but argues that these traits, instead of being disadvantages, are actually advantageous. Alluding to Weininger's belief that the absolute female lacks an ego, Greer exclaims: "If women had no ego, if they had no separation from the rest of the world, no repression and no regression, how nice that would be!" ["Greer illustrates most perfectly with this comment that even the most masculine of women (herself) have almost no masculinity in them at all. The truly masculine ego wishes to overcome itself, but the feminine ego wishes to annihilate itself - or rather, wishes to *be* annihilated. Man wishes to go forth and conquer death, but Woman will never even enter into the world." - K.S.]

Some philosophers believed that there was some method to Weininger's madness. The German-Jewish Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch (1885-1977), for example, said that Weininger was driven by "the most vehement misogyny known to history".

Ludwig Wittgenstein grew up in Vienna and his adolescence coincided with the period when the Weininger "cult" was at its height. He wrote in 1931 in a private notebook that he had never "in-

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

vented" a novel line of thought. "I have always taken over from someone else", he observed, appending a list of his sources of intellectual stimuli, which included physicists Ludwig Boltzmann and Heinrich Hertz, cultural critic Karl Kraus (who was one of Weininger's main supporters), architect Adolf Loos, historian Oswald Spengler, and philosophers Arthur Schopenhauer, Gottlob Frege, and Otto Weininger.

Wittgenstein enthusiastically recommended *Sex and Character* to his peers. When philosopher G. E. Moore reacted critically, Wittgenstein responded: "I can quite imagine that you don't admire Weininger very much, what with that beastly translation and the fact that W. must feel very foreign to you. It is true that he is fantastic but he is great and fantastic."¹⁴⁹

"Quotations on Genius" (n.d.)

1. "Great men grow tired of contentedness." - *Napoleon Bonaparte*
2. "Great men are meteors that burn so that the earth may be lighted." - *Napoleon Bonaparte*
3. "Men of genius are often dull and inert in society; as the blazing meteor, when it descends to earth, is only a stone." - *Longfellow*
4. "Every great action is extreme." - *Duc de La Rochefoucauld*
5. "However brilliant an action may be, it should not be accounted great when it is not the result of great purpose." - *Duc de La Rochefoucauld*
6. "There are two kinds of geniuses. The characteristic of the one is roaring, but the lightning is meagre and rarely strikes; the other kind is characterized by reflection by which it constrains itself or restrains the roaring. But the lightning is all the more intense; with the speed and sureness of lightning it hits the selected particular points - and is fatal." - *Kierkegaard*
7. "The case with most men is that they go out into life with one or another accidental characteristic of personality of which they say: Well, this is the way I am. I cannot do otherwise. Then the world gets to work on them and thus the majority of men are ground into conformity. In each generation a small part cling to their "I cannot do otherwise" and lose their minds. Finally there are a very few in each generation who in spite of all life's terrors cling with more and more inwardness to this 'I cannot do otherwise'. They are the geniuses.
8. Their 'I cannot do otherwise' is an infinite thought, for if one were to cling firmly to a finite thought, he would lose his mind." - *Kierkegaard*
9. "Where is the lightning to lick you with its tongue? Where is the madness with which you should be cleansed? Behold, I show you the Superman. He is this lightning, he is this madness." - *Nietzsche (in Zarathustra)*
10. "Geniuses are like thunderstorms. They go against the wind, terrify people, cleanse the air." - *Kierkegaard*
11. "A genius is one who can do anything except make a living." - *Joey Adams*
12. "Genius is born, not paid." - *Oscar Wilde*
13. "I swear to you, sirs, that excessive consciousness is a disease — a genuine, absolute disease. For everyday human existence it would more than suffice to have the ordinary share of human consciousness; that is to say, one half, one quarter that that which falls to the lot of a cultivated man in our wretched nineteenth century [...] It would, for instance, be quite enough to have the amount of consciousness by which all the so-called simple, direct people and men of action live." - *Fyodor Dostoevsky*
14. "Genius borrows nobly." - *R.W Emerson*
15. "Great geniuses have the shortest biographies. Their cousins can tell you nothing about them." - *R.W Emerson*
16. "Talent, lying in the understanding, is often inherited; genius, being the action

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

- of reason or imagination, rarely or never." - *Samuel T. Coleridge*
16. "Genius is not so much about new ideas as it is about clarity of ideas. Two people can have the same idea yet it will be genius in the one and mediocrity in the other." - *Kevin Solway*
17. "It has been seen that the object of a sane upbringing is increasingly to direct all emotion towards objects which involve other people. Now basically the situation of being finite is an infinitely frustrating one, which would be expected to arouse sensations of desperation and aggression - as indeed it may sometimes be seen to do in very young children. I am aware that I must be careful, in using the word aggression, to state that I do not mean aggression directed towards people. What I mean is an impersonal drive directed against reality - it is difficult to give examples but it may be presumed that geniuses who are at all worthy of the name preserve a small degree of this. However, since all emotion must be directed towards people, it is obvious that the only form of aggression which a sane person can understand is aggression against people, which is probably better described as sadism or cruelty." - *Celia Green*
18. "I was a man who stood in symbolic relations to the art and culture of my age...The gods had given me almost everything. I had genius, a distinguished name, high social position, brilliancy, intellectual daring; I made art a philosophy, and philosophy an art: I altered the minds of men and the colour of things: there was nothing I said or did that did not make people wonder...I treated Art as the supreme reality, and life as a mere mode of fiction: I awoke the imagination of my century so that it created myth and legend around me: I summed up all systems in a phrase, and all existence in an epigram." - *Oscar Wilde, in De Profundis*
19. "Genius is the ability to act rightly without precedent - the power to do the right thing the first time." - *Elbert Hubbard*
20. "Intellectuals solve problems; geniuses prevent them." - *Albert Einstein*
21. "To see things in the seed, that is genius." - *Lao-tzu*
22. "The ability of someone to choose and arrange the details of their creative field guided by a vision is a major hallmark of a genius." - *John Briggs*
23. "Philosophy becomes poetry and science imagination, in the enthusiasm of genius." - *Disraeli*
24. "Both wit and understanding are trifles without integrity. The ignorant peasant without fault is greater than the philosopher with many. What is genius or courage without a heart?" - *Oliver Goldsmith*
25. "A man of genius is unbearable, unless he possesses at least two things besides: gratitude and purity." - *Nietzsche*
26. "Neither a lofty degree of intelligence nor imagination nor both together go to the making of genius. Love, love, love, that is the soul of genius." - *Wolfgang A. Mozart*
27. "Genius is present in every age, but the men carrying it within them remain benumbed unless extraordinary events occur to heat up and melt the mass so that it flows forth." - *Denis Diderot*
28. "The first and last thing required of genius is the love of truth." - *Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe*
29. "The poets' scrolls will outlive the monuments of stone. Genius survives; all else is claimed by death." - *Edmund Spenser*
30. "Next to possessing genius one's self is the power of appreciating it in others." - *Mark Twain*
31. "Two sorts of writers possess genius: those who think, and those who cause others to think." - *R.W. Emerson*
32. "In every work of genius, we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty." - *R.W. Emerson*
33. "The reason we have so few geniuses is that people do not have faith in what they know to be true." - *Kevin Solway*
34. "Genius does what it must, and Talent does what it can." - *Owen Meredith, Earl of Lytton*
35. "Andy Warhol is the only genius with an IQ of 60." - *Gore Vidal*

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

36. "I have nothing to declare except my genius." - *Oscar Wilde's* response to an American customs official
37. "Genius is an infinite capacity for giving pains." - *Oscar Wilde*
38. "Genius learns from nature, its own nature. Talent learns from art." - *Oscar Wilde*

Genius:

- 1) To believe your own thought. To believe that what is true for you is ultimately true.
 - 2) A sledgehammer.
 - 3) The fruit of labour and thought.
 - 4) The ability to see the obvious.
 - 5) Soul.
 - 6) The ability to put into effect what is in your mind.
 - 7) Something one can become.
39. "Great genius takes shape by contact with another great genius, but, less by assimilation than by friction." - *Heinrich Heine*
40. "At the bidding of a Peter the Hermit millions of men hurled themselves against the East; the words of an hallucinated enthusiast such as Mahomet created a force capable of triumphing over the Graeco-Roman world; an obscure monk like Luther bathed Europe in blood. The voice of a Galileo or a Newton will never have the least echo among the masses. The inventors of genius hasten the march of civilization. The fanatics and the hallucinated create history." - *Gustave Le Bon*
41. "Great minds are related to the brief span of time during which they live as great buildings are to a little square in which they stand: you cannot see them in all their magnitude because you are standing too close to them." - *Arthur Schopenhauer*
42. "A man of genius makes no mistakes. His Errors are the portals of discovery." - *James Joyce*
43. "There is in every madman a misunderstood genius whose idea, shining in his head, frightened people, and for whom delirium was the only solution to the strangulation that life had prepared for him." - *Antonin Artaud*, of Van Gogh
44. "Oh! how near are genius and madness! Men imprison them and chain them, or raise statues to them." - *Denis Diderot*
45. "There was never a genius without a tincture of madness." - *Aristotle*
46. "It is frequently the tragedy of the great artist, as it is of the great scientist, that he frightens the ordinary man. If he is more than a popular story-teller it may take humanity a generation to absorb and grow accustomed to the new geography with which the scientist or artist presents us. Even then, perhaps only the more imaginative and literate may accept him. Subconsciously the genius is feared as an image breaker; frequently he does not accept the opinions of the mass, or man's opinion of himself." - *Loren Eiseley*, in "The Mind as Nature"
47. "Genius ... is the capacity to see ten things where the ordinary man sees one." - *Ezra Pound*
48. "Genius not only diagnoses the situation but supplies the answers." - *Robert Graves*
49. "It takes a lot of time to be a genius, you have to sit around so much doing nothing, really doing nothing." - *Gertrude Stein*
50. "The true genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction." - *Samuel Johnson*
51. "Coffee is good for talent, but genius wants prayer." - *Ralph Waldo Emerson*
52. "The man of genius does not steal, he conquers." - *Dumas*
53. "The principal mark of a genius is not perfection but originality, the opening of new frontiers." - *Arthur Koestler*
54. "Talent warms-up the given (as they say in cookery) and makes it apparent; genius brings something new. But our time lets talent pass for genius. They want to abolish the genius, deify the genius, and let talent forge ahead." - *Kierkegaard*
55. "It is through woman that ideality is born into the world and - what were man without her! There is many a man who has become a genius through a woman, many a one a hero, many a one a poet, many a one even a saint; but he did not become a genius through the

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

woman he married, for through her he only became a privy councillor; he did not become a hero through the woman he married, for through her he only became a general; he did not become a poet through the woman he married, for through her he only became a father; he did not become a saint through the woman he married, for he did not marry, and would have married but one - the one whom he did not marry; just as the others became a genius, became a hero, became a poet through the help of the woman they did not marry." - *Kierkegaard*

56. "Women, in general, are not attracted to art at all, nor knowledge, and not at all to genius." - *Rousseau*

57. "Male conspiracy cannot explain all female failures. I am convinced that, even without restrictions, there still would have been no female Pascal, Milton, or Kant. Genius is not checked by social obstacles: it will overcome." - *Camille Paglia*, in *Sexual Personae*

58. "There are no female geniuses because there are no female Jack-the-Rippers." - *Camille Paglia*

59. "Women of genius commonly have masculine faces, figures and manners. In transplanting brains to an alien soil God leaves a little of the original earth clinging to the roots." - *Ambrose Bierce*

60. "Sporadic great men come everywhere. But for a community to get vibrating through and through with intensely active life, many geniuses coming together and in rapid succession are required. This is why great epochs are so rare, - why the sudden bloom of a Greece, an early Rome, a Renaissance, is such a mystery. Blow must follow blow so fast that no cooling can occur in the intervals. Then the mass of the nation glows incandescent, and may continue to glow by pure inertia long after the originators of its internal movement have passed away. We often hear surprise expressed that in these high tides of human affairs not only the people should be filled with stronger life, but that individual geniuses should seem so exceptionally abundant. This mystery is just about as deep as the time-honored conundrum as

to why great rivers flow by great towns. It is true that great public fermentations awaken and adopt many geniuses who in more torpid times would have had no chance to work. But over and above this there must be an exceptional concourse of genius about a time, to make the fermentation begin at all. The unlikeliness of the concourse is far greater than the unlikeliness of any particular genius; hence the rarity of these periods and the exceptional aspect which they always wear." - *William James*

61. "A genius is the man in whom you are least likely to find the power of attending to anything insipid or distasteful in itself. He breaks his engagements, leaves his letters unanswered, neglects his family duties incorrigibly, because he is powerless to turn his attention down and back from those more interesting trains of imagery with which his genius constantly occupies his mind." - *William James*

62. "Genius always gives its best at first, prudence at last." - *Lavater, J.C.*

63. "Persons of genius, and those who are most capable of art, are always most fond of nature: as such are chiefly sensible, that all art consists in the imitation and study of nature." - *Pope*

64. "It is not the strengths, but the durations of great sentiments that make great men." - *Nietzsche*

65. "Genius is nothing but continued attention." - *Claude Adrien Helvetius*

66. "It is easy to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after your own; but the great man is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude." - *Emerson*

67. "I call that mind free which protects itself against the usurpations of society, which does not cower to human opinion, which feels itself accountable to a higher tribunal than man's, which respects itself too much to be the slave of the many or the few." - *Channing*

68. "The genius differs from us men in being able to endure isolation, his rank as a genius is proportionate to his strength for enduring isolation, whereas

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

- we men are constantly in need of "the others," the herd; we die, or despair, if we are not reassured by being in the herd, of the same opinion as the herd." - *Kierkegaard*
69. "Conversation enriches the understanding, but solitude is the school of genius." - *Gibbon*
70. "Man as an individual is a genius. But men in the mass form the Headless Monster, a great, brutish idiot that goes where prodded." - *Charles Chaplin*
71. "Genius is the ability to escape the human condition; Humanity is the need to escape." - *Q. Uim*
72. "Precisely because the tyranny of opinion is such as to make eccentricity a reproach, it is desirable, in order to break through that tyranny, that people should be eccentric. Eccentricity has always abounded when and where strength of character has abounded; and the amount of eccentricity in a society has generally been proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigor, and moral courage it contained. That so few dare to be eccentric marks the chief danger of the time." - *John Stuart Mill*
73. "The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred million to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive ... We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn." - *Thoreau*
74. "Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth - more than ruin - more even than death... Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible, thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions, and comfortable habit. Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man." - *Bertrand Russell*
75. "He is a man of *capacity* who possesses considerable intellectual riches: while he is a man of *genius* who finds out a vein of new ore. Originality is the seeing nature differently from others, and yet as it is in itself. It is not singularity or affectation, but the discovery of new and valuable truth. All the world do not see the whole meaning of any object they have been looking at. Habit blinds them to some things: shortsightedness to others. Every mind is not a gauge and measure of truth. Nature has her surface and her dark recesses. She is deep, obscure, and infinite. It is only minds on whom she makes her fullest impressions that can penetrate her shrine or unveil her Holy of Holies. It is only those whom she has filled with her spirit that have the boldness or the power to reveal her mysteries to others." - *William Hazlitt*
76. "The moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decisions, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now." - *Goethe*
77. "Action, so to speak, is the genius of nature." - *Blair*
78. "When a true genius appears in this world, you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him." - *Jonathan Swift*
79. "Society is a republic. When an individual endeavors to lift himself above his fellows, he is dragged down by the mass, either by means of ridicule or of calumny. No one shall be more virtuous or more intellectually gifted than others. Whoever, by the irresistible force of genius, rises above the common herd is certain to be ostracized by society, which will pursue him with such merciless derision and detraction that at last he will be compelled to retreat into the solitude of his thoughts." - *Heinrich Heine*
80. "Genius is its own reward; for the best that one is, one must necessarily be for oneself... Further, genius consists in the working of the free intellect., and as a

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

consequence the productions of genius serve no useful purpose. The work of genius may be music, philosophy, painting, or poetry; it is nothing for use or profit. To be useless and unprofitable is one of the characteristics of genius; it is their patent of nobility." – *Schopenhauer*

81. "Genius does not herd with genius." – *O.W. Holmes*

82. "This is the test and triumph of originality, not to show us what has never been, and what we may therefore very easily never have dreamt of, but to point out to us what is before our eyes and under our feet, though we have had no suspicion of its existence, for want of sufficient strength of intuition, of determined grasp of mind to seize and retain it." – *William Hazlitt*

83. "The only difference between a genius and one of common capacity is that the former anticipates and explores what the latter accidentally hits upon; but even the man of genius himself more frequently employs the advantages that chance presents him; it is the lapidary who gives value to the diamond which the peasant has dug up without knowing its value." – *Abbe Guillaume Raynal*

84. "What makes men of genius, or rather, what they make, is not new ideas, it is that idea - possessing them - that what has been said has still not been said enough." – *Eugene Delacroix*

85. "Genius might well be defined as the ability to make a platitude sound as though it were an original remark." – *L. B. Walton*

86. "Genius never desires what does not exist." – *Kierkegaard*

87. "The great things in life are what they seem to be. And for that reason, strange as it may sound to you, often are very difficult to interpret (understand). Great passions are for the great of souls. Great events can only be seen by people who are on a level with them. We think we can have our visions for nothing. We cannot. Even the finest and most self-sacrificing visions have to be paid for. Strangely enough, that is what makes them fine." – *Oscar Wilde*

88. "Fortunately for us, there have been traitors and there have been heretics, blasphemers, thinkers, investigators, lovers of liberty, men of genius who have given their lives to better the condition of their fellow-men. It may be well enough here to ask the question: What is greatness? A great man adds to the sum of knowledge, extends the horizon of thought, releases souls from the Bastille of fear, crosses unknown and mysterious seas, gives new islands and new continents to the domain of thought, new constellations to the firmament of mind. A great man does not seek applause or place; he seeks for truth; he seeks the road to happiness, and what he ascertains he gives to others. A great man throws pearls before swine, and the swine are sometimes changed to men. If the great had always kept their pearls, vast multitudes would be barbarians now. A great man is a torch in the darkness, a beacon: in superstition's night, an inspiration and a prophecy. Greatness is not the gift of majorities; it cannot be thrust upon any man; men cannot give it to another; they can give place and power, but not greatness. The place does not make the man, nor the scepter the king. Greatness is from within." – *Robert Ingersoll*

89. "Some superior minds are unrecognized because there is no standard by which to weigh them." – *Joseph Joubert*

90. "It is impossible that a genius - at least a literary genius - can ever be discovered by his intimates; they are so close to him that he is out of focus to them and they can't get at his proportions; they can't perceive that there is any considerable difference between his bulk and their own." – *Mark Twain*

91. "Thousands of geniuses live and die undiscovered - either by themselves or by others." – *Mark Twain*

92. "The world is always ready to receive talent with open arms. Very often it does not know what to do with genius." – *Oliver Wendell Holmes*

93. "Society expresses its sympathy for the geniuses of the past to distract attention from the fact that it has no intention of

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

- being sympathetic to the geniuses of the present." - *Celia Green*
94. "The public is wonderfully tolerant. It forgives everything except genius." - *Oscar Wilde*
95. "Every person of genius is considerably helped by being dead." - *Robert S. Lund*
96. "Genius makes its observations in short-hand; talent writes them out at length." - *Christian Nevell Bovee*
97. "Genius is the ability to reduce the complicated to the simple." - *C. W. Ceram*
98. "It takes immense genius to represent, simply and sincerely, what we see in front of us." - *Edmond Duranty*
99. "Genius without education is like silver in the mine." - *Benjamin Franklin*
100. "The genius of any single man can no more equal learning, than a private purse hold way with the exchequer." - *Francis Bacon*
101. "Talent without genius isn't much, but genius without talent is nothing whatsoever." - *Paul Valery*
102. "Men of genius are the worst possible role models for men of talent." - *Murray D. Edwards*
103. "Genius, as an explosive power, beats gunpowder hollow." - *Thomas Huxley*
104. "A genius is one who shoots at something no one else can see, and hits it." - *Author unknown*
105. "Real genius is nothing else but the supernatural virtue of humility in the domain of thought." - *Simone Weil*
106. "Genius is the capacity for productive reaction against one's training." - *Bernard Berenson*
107. "Genius is a promontory jutting out of the infinite." - *Victor Hugo*
108. "The lamp of genius burns quicker than the lamp of life." - *Johann Friedrich Von Schiller*
109. "Genius is, to be sure, not a matter of arbitrariness, but rather of freedom, just as wit, love, and faith, which once shall become arts and disciplines. We should demand genius from everybody, without, however, expecting it." - *Friedrich Schlegel*
110. "Could we teach taste or genius by rules, they would be no longer taste and genius." - *Joshua Reynolds*
111. "Adversity reveals genius, prosperity conceals it." - *Horace*
112. "In following the strong bent of his genius, he was self assured that he should 'create the taste by which he is to be enjoyed.'" - *Emerson*
113. "Mediocrity is self-inflicted. Genius is self-bestowed." - *Walter Russell*
114. "Everyone is a genius at least once a year; a real genius has his original ideas closer together." - *G. C. Lichtenberg*
115. "Few people think more than two or three times a year. I have made an international reputation for myself by thinking once or twice a week." - *George Bernard Shaw*
116. "Sometimes men come by the name of genius in the same way that certain insects come by the name of centipede - not because they have a hundred feet, but because most people can't count above fourteen." - *G. C. Lichtenberg*
117. "Genius is personality with a penny's worth of talent. Error which chances to rise above the commonplace." - *Pablo Picasso*
118. "Once you had to be a genius to make works of art. Now you have to be a genius to understand them." - *Roy Emmins*
119. "When human power becomes so great and original that we can account for it only as a kind of divine imagination, we call it genius." - *William Crashaw*
120. "So few people think. When we find one who really does, we call him a genius." - *Author Unknown*
121. "The ordinary man casts a shadow in a way we do not quite understand. The man of genius casts light." - *George Steiner*
122. "True genius resides in the capacity for evaluation of uncertain, hazardous, and conflicting information." - *Winston Churchill*
123. "Genius is an infinite capacity for taking life by the scruff of the neck." - *Christopher Quill*
124. "Genius is that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates." - *Samuel Johnson*
125. "Improvement makes straight roads; but the crooked roads without improvement are roads of genius." - *William Blake*

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

126. "Towering genius disdains a beaten path. It seeks regions hitherto unexplored." - *Abraham Lincoln*
127. "Art is a jealous mistress, and, if a man have a genius for painting, poetry, music, architecture, or philosophy, he makes a bad husband, and an ill provider, and should be wise in season, and not fetter himself with duties which will imbitter his days and spoil him for his proper work." - *R.W. Emerson*
128. "Everyone is born with genius, but most people only keep it a few minutes." - *Edgard Varese (1883 - 1965)*
129. "Every man is a potential genius until he does something." - *Sir Herbert Beerbohm*
130. "Geniuses experience a second adolescence, whereas other people are only young once." - *Goethe*
131. "If children grew up according to early indications, we should have nothing but geniuses." - *Goethe*
132. "True genius sees with the eyes of a child and thinks with the brain of a genius." - *Puzant Thomajan*
133. "Genius has somewhat of the infantine; But of the childish not a touch or taint." - *Robert Browning*

Otto Weininger on Genius

1. "The man of genius is he who understands incomparably more other beings than the average man. Goethe is said to have said of himself that there was no vice or crime of which he could not trace the tendency in himself, and that at some period of his life he could not have understood fully. The genius, therefore, is a more complicated, more richly endowed, more varied man; and a man is the closer to being a genius the more men he has in his personality, and the more really and strongly he has these others within him. If comprehension of those about him only flickers in him like a poor candle, then he is unable, like the great poet, to kindle a mighty flame in his heroes, to give distinction and character to his creations. The ideal of an artistic genius is to live in all men, to lose himself in all men, to reveal himself in multitudes; and so also the aim of the philosopher is to discover all others in himself, to fuse them into a unit which is his own unit." - *Otto Weininger*
2. "The ideal genius, who has all men within him, has also all their preferences and all their dislikes. There is in him not only the universality of men, but of all nature. He is the man to whom all things tell their secrets, to whom most happens, and whom least escapes. He understands most things, and those most deeply, because he has the greatest number of things to contrast and compare them with. The genius is he who is conscious of most, and of that most acutely. And so without doubt his sensations must be most acute; but this must not be understood as implying, say, in the artist the keenest power of vision, in the composer the most acute hearing; the measure of genius is not to be taken from the acuteness of the sense organ but from that of the perceiving brain." - *Otto Weininger*
3. "Universality is the distinguishing mark of genius. There is no such thing as a special genius, a genius for mathematics, or for music, or even for chess, but only a universal genius. The genius is a man who knows everything without having learned it." - *Otto Weininger*
4. "I regret that I must so continually use the word genius, as if that should apply only to a caste as well defined from those below as income-tax payers are from the untaxed. The word genius was very probably invented by a man who had small claims on it himself; greater men would have understood better what to be a genius really was, and probably they would have come to see that the word could be applied to most people. Goethe said that perhaps only a genius is able to understand a genius." - *Otto Weininger*
5. "The reason why madness overtakes so many men of genius - fools believe it

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

comes from the influence of Venus, or the spinal degeneration of neurasthenics - is that for many the burden becomes too heavy, the task of bearing the whole world on the shoulders, like Atlas, intolerable for the smaller, but never for the really mighty minds. But the higher a man mounts, the greater may be his fall; all genius is a conquering of chaos, mystery, and darkness, and if it degenerates and goes to pieces, the ruin is greater in proportion to the success. The genius which runs to madness is no longer genius; it has chosen happiness instead of morality. All madness is the outcome of the insupportability of suffering attached to all consciousness." -

Otto Weininger

6. "No one suffers so much as he [the genius] with the people, and, therefore, for the people, with whom he lives. For, in a certain sense, it is certainly only 'by suffering' that a man knows. If compassion is not itself clear, abstractly conceivable or visibly symbolic knowledge, it is, at any rate, the strongest impulse for the acquisition of knowledge. It is only by suffering that the genius understands men. And the genius suffers most because he suffers with and in each and all; but he suffers most through his understanding. ..." - *Otto Weininger*

7. "It results from their periodicity that, in men of genius, sterile years precede productive years, these again to be followed by sterility, the barren periods being marked by psychological self-depreciation, by the feeling that they are less than other men; times in which the remembrance of the creative periods is a torment, and when they envy those who go about undisturbed by such penalties. Just as his moments of ecstasy are more poignant, so are the periods of depression of a man of genius more intense than those of other men. Every great man has such periods, of longer or shorter duration, times in which he loses self-confidence, in which he thinks of suicide; times in which, indeed, he may be sowing the seeds of a future harvest, but which are devoid of the stimulus to production; times which call

forth the blind criticisms 'How such a genius is degenerating!' 'How he has played himself out!' 'How he repeats himself!' and so forth." - *Otto Weininger*

8. "Talent is hereditary; it may be the common possession of a whole family (eg, the Bach family); genius is not transmitted; it is never diffused, but is strictly individual." - *Otto Weininger*

9. "The age does not create the genius it requires. The genius is not the product of his age, is not to be explained by it, and we do him no honour if we attempt to account for him by it ... And as the causes of its appearance do not lie in any one age, so also the consequences are not limited by time. The achievements of genius live forever, and time cannot change them. By his works a man of genius is granted immortality on the earth, and thus in a threefold manner he has transcended time. His universal comprehension and memory forbid the annihilation of his experiences with the passing of the moment in which each occurred; his birth is independent of his age, and his work never dies." - *Otto Weininger*

10. "Genius is, in its essence, nothing but the full completion of the idea of a man, and, therefore, every man ought to have some quality of it, and it should be regarded as a possible principle for everyone. Genius is the highest morality, and, therefore, it is every one's duty. Genius is to be attained by a supreme act of the will, in which the whole universe is affirmed in the individual. Genius is something which 'men of genius' take upon themselves; it is the greatest exertion and the greatest pride, the greatest misery and the greatest ecstasy to a man. A man may become a genius if he wishes to. But at once it will certainly be said: 'Very many men would like very much to be 'original geniuses,' and their wish has no effect. But if these men who 'would like very much' had a livelier sense of what is signified by their wish, if they were aware that genius is identical with universal responsibility - and until that is grasped it will only be a wish and not a determina-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

tion - it is highly probable that a very large number of these men would cease to wish to become geniuses." - *Otto Weininger*

11. "The most powerful musical motifs of world-music are those in which the representation of the breaking-through of time within time, the breaking out of time, is attempted, in which an ictus falls upon the tonic such that it reabsorbs the other parts of the melody (which as a whole represents time; separate points unified by the I) and in this manner sublimates the melody. The end of the Grail-motif in 'Parsifal,' the Siegfried-motif, are such melodies. There is, however, an act that, so to speak, reabsorbs the future in itself, experiences in advance all future falling back into immorality already as guilt, no less than all the immoral past, and by this means grows out over and beyond both: A timeless setting of the character, rebirth. It is the act by which genius comes to be." - *Otto Weininger*

12. "Since the soul of man is the microcosm, and great men are those who live entirely in and through their souls, the whole universe thus having its being in them, the female must be described as absolutely without the quality of genius. ... There is no female genius, and there never has been one ... *and there never can be one*. Those who are in favour of laxity in these matters, and are anxious to extend and enlarge the idea of genius in order to make it possible to include women, would simply by such action destroy the concept of genius. ... How could a soulless being possess genius? The possession of genius is identical with profundity; and if any one were to try to combine woman and profundity as subject and predicate, he would be contradicted on all sides. A female genius is a contradiction in terms, for genius is simply intensified, perfectly developed, universally conscious maleness." - *Otto Weininger*

13. "Mankind occurs as male or female, as something or nothing. Woman has no share in ontological reality, no relation to the thing-in-itself, which, in the deepest interpretation, is the absolute, is

God. Man in his highest form, the genius, has such a relation, and for him the absolute is either the conception of the highest worth of existence, in which case he is a philosopher; or it is the wonderful fairyland of dreams, the kingdom of absolute beauty, and then he is an artist." - *Otto Weininger*

14. "In those rare individual cases where women approach genius they also approach masculinity." - *Otto Weininger*

15. "The man of genius possesses, like everything else, the complete female in himself; but woman herself is only a part of the Universe, and the part can never be the whole; femaleness can never include genius. This lack of genius on the part of woman is inevitable because woman is not a monad, and cannot reflect the Universe." - *Otto Weininger*

16. "There are probably very few people who have not at some time of their lives had some quality of genius. If they have not had such, it is probable that they have also been without great sorrow or great pain. They would have needed only to live sufficiently intently for a time for some quality to reveal itself. The poems of first love are a case in point, and certainly such love is a sufficient stimulus." - *Otto Weininger*

17. "A nation orients itself by its own geniuses, and derives from them its ideas of its own ideals, but the guiding star serves also as a light to other nations. As speech has been created by a few great men, the most extraordinary wisdom lies concealed in it, a wisdom which reveals itself to a few ardent explorers but which is usually overlooked by the stupid professional philologists." - *Otto Weininger*

18. "The genius is not a critic of language, but its creator, as he is the creator of all the mental achievements which are the material of culture and which make up the objective mind, the spirit of the peoples. The 'timeless' men are those who make history, for history can be made only by those who are not floating with the stream. It is only those who are unconditioned by time who have real value, and whose productions have an

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

enduring force. And the events that become forces of culture become so only because they have an enduring value." - *Otto Weininger*

19. "It is the genius in reality and not the other who is the creator of history, for it is only the genius who is outside and unconditioned by history. The great man has a history, the emperor is only a part of history. The great man transcends time; time creates and time destroys the emperor." - *Otto Weininger*

20. "It is certainly true that most men need some kind of a God. A few, and they are the men of genius, do not bow to an alien law. The rest try to justify their doings and misdoings, their thinking and existence (at least the menial side of it), to someone else, whether it be the personal God of the Jews, or a beloved, respected, and revered human being. It is only in this way that they can bring their lives under the social law..." - *Otto Weininger*

21. "The ego of the genius accordingly is simply itself universal comprehension, the centre of infinite space; the great man contains the whole universe within himself; genius is the living microcosm. He is not an intricate mosaic, a chemical combination of an infinite number of elements; the argument in chap. iv. as to his relation to other men and things must not be taken in that sense; he is everything. In him and through him all psychical manifestations cohere and are real experiences, not an elaborate piece-work, a whole put together from parts in the fashion of science. For the genius the ego is the all, lives as the all; the genius sees nature and all existences as whole; the relations of things flash on him intuitively; he has not to build bridges of stones between them." - *Otto Weininger*

22. "The man of genius is he whose ego has acquired consciousness. He is enabled by it to distinguish the fact that others are different, to perceive the 'ego' of other men, even when it is not pronounced enough for them to be conscious of it themselves. But it is only he who feels that every other man is also an ego, a monad, an individual centre of

the universe, with specific manner of feeling and thinking and a distinct past, he alone is in a position to avoid making use of his neighbours as means to an end." - *Otto Weininger*

23. "The history of the human race (naturally I mean the history of its mind and not merely its wars) is readily intelligible on the theory of the appearance of genius, and of the imitation by the more monkey-like individuals of the conduct of those with genius. The chief stages, no doubt, were house- building, agriculture, and above all, speech. Every single word has been the invention of a single man, as, indeed, we still see, if we leave out of consideration the merely technical terms. How else could language have arisen? The earliest words were 'onomatopoetic'; a sound similar to the exciting cause was evolved almost without the will of the speaker, in direct response to the sensuous stimulation. All the other words were originally metaphors, or comparisons, a kind of primitive poetry, for all prose has come from poetry. Many, perhaps the majority of the greatest geniuses, have remained unknown. Think of the proverbs, now almost commonplaces, such as 'one good turn deserves another.' These were said for the first time by some great man. How many quotations from the classics, or sayings of Christ, have passed into the common language, so that we have to think twice before we can remember who were the authors of them. Language is as little the work of the multitude as our ballads. Every form of speech owes much that is not acknowledged to individuals of another language. Because of the universality of genius, the words and phrases that he invents are useful not only to those who use the language in which he wrote them. A nation orients itself by its own geniuses, and derives from them its ideas of its own ideals, but the guiding star serves also as a light to other nations. As speech has been created by a few great men, the most extraordinary wisdom lies concealed in it, a wisdom which reveals itself to a few ardent explorers but which is usually overlooked

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

by the stupid professional philologists."

- Otto Weininger¹⁵⁰

"Otto Weininger's Notebook" (2000)

Acknowledgements

This is a new translation of the aphorisms from Weininger's notebook, and borrows from both my previous translation* as well as from a recently released draft translation by Kelly Jones.

Apart from thanking Kelly Jones for her efforts I would also like to thank Therese Foote and Albina Leibman-Klix for their help. Thanks also go to Allan Janik and his assistant Judith Bakascy. Any inaccuracies that remain in this translation are a result of my own shortcomings.

We know very little of the most difficult, wandering period in Jesus's life, because he himself was painfully silent about it — up until the answer that he gave the angel who called him "Good

Master!": "Why do you call me good? No—where is there good!" —

Suicide out of incapacity, from taking too long to recover from sickness, is just as abandoning and faithless as the suicide to escape sin is cowardly.

Whether a man holds suicide to be permissible or always impermissible, can be characteristic as to whether he is in fact shallow or deep at heart.

I know, despite the small number of positive recognitions, that I am the founder of the only healing scientific therapy, the only true pathology. I know this and have also had the good fortune, against my expectations, to strike upon an exceedingly outstanding man whom I have convinced, and also believes the same. The coming centuries must testify this to be true of me.

There is *only* psycho-therapy, assuredly not that entirely defective psychotherapy *from the outside*, that we have today, where the foreign will of a suggester must achieve that for which one's own is all too weak; not an heteronomous, but an *autonomous* hygiene and therapy, where each is his own diagnostician and thereby even also his own therapist. Each one must cure himself and be his own doctor.

If he wills that, God will help him. Otherwise no one will.

To...

He is not to take my suicide as a personal thing, as you have done with F., which pertains to you and to your strife or directly as your special unhappiness. You will also feel that inclination here. But don't believe that it is correct!

I believe that my mental abilities are certainly of such a nature that I would become, in a certain sense, the solver of all problems. I do not believe that I could have remained in error anywhere for long. I believe that I would have earned the name of the Redeemer, since I had the nature of a Redeemer.

"To feel oneself wretched" as illness:

Suicide from the inability to avoid crime.
Suicide from the inability to escape illness.

My joy in "hell-raising" in school classes is my joy in chaos.

The burden of the man who has the problem of "connectedness", is simply solitude. The criminal accepts no burden on himself, and so also no solitude.

To G. about Naples. That he must be there. Writers, and people who cannot write. More about the Farnese Hercules. About himself. He has strength. My theory on illness.

Why do I write that to him? Out of duty, for no other reason.

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

My forced uprightness is the exaction of freedom, substitution for God.

G. (the athlete): strength as an *end-in-itself*, without an ethical goal (seeks sport and physical exercise); that's how he sins, because he is not *weak* (he dares to show himself off) and yet through this he can *fall*. For strength follows from goodness (its means, to assert itself, to find itself), never an end-in-itself.

For G.: His guarding himself from foreign influence means that he relies no more on his own self than on fantasy. I have fantasy for myself, not myself for fantasy. I do the same with truth. The need for originality is thus weakness.

The Nature of the Sciences

1. The spatial-temporal elements are introduced as constants:

Geography* — History

2. Space and time are separated:

Development of variables

1. space elements: geometry, cosmography;

2. time elements: physics.[†]

Nothing is the mirror of Something (of the light).

As the will is, so also is its projection, the movement, the child, something between being and nonbeing.

There is a whole realm of projections. The empirical world, that we take to be true, originates through such projections of Something onto Nothing, projections of the higher life.

Remarks on Ewald's ideas:

Here lies, truly what one finds nowhere expressed, perhaps the most difficult problem of philosophy.

Kant has referred the psychological life to the phenomenal just as fully as the life of the outer world. He has robbed time of every meaning. But through this the possibility of ethics destroyed.

* Geography is sadistic. Explanation is sadistic. The sadist feels the organs a real. [Artur Gerber]

† Experimental physics and theoretical physics. [Artur Gerber]

If all *good impulses* in me also only belong to appearance and *not* to being, then my life has no meaning. For the meaning of my life stands and falls on whether I can proceed in a positive relation to good or not.

If all psychological life is only appearance, then I cannot in any way make myself worthy of an eternal life. The idea of the "Progressus" (towards holiness), that Kant shares, would be thwarted.

The transcendental is the minimum of the eternal.

The genius does not need the transcendental method, for there the normal intuition has certainty enough.

The justification of the psychological method lies in the seeing of things in God! The nearer the intuition comes to an idea, the more unnecessary the transcendental method becomes.

Here are the *most significant* of Kant's errors:

1. *Neglect of the meaning of time;*
2. *that he makes no distinction between the reality of the inner and the outer life;*
3. *theoretically wanted to know nothing about those things possessing a higher reality.*

Since crime and punishment are not actually different, one may therefore be confident: no criminal really goes unpunished.

Critique of Kantian ethics and its "atheism".

What I claim is: *that the will is always good and that there can be no will at all to evil* or an evil will.

Evil is the resignation of the will and the birth of *desire out of want*. This is exactly demonstrated by the fact that the will is always conscious, desire is unconscious.

The ideas of freedom and universality must be identical. Since every limitation is a determination from outside, it thus has no freedom. Yet if man is free, then he must be able to become what he wills. But the requirement for that is the freedom of possibilities. The ideas of freedom and totality are thus *identical!*

Oneness and Totality within the horizon.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Space as the I.

Chance hangs together with incarnation.

It is not at all true that all human action is driven by desire for pleasure. All action of the good man comes from what one can call *worth* or *existence* or *life*.

Only the embracing of *life* is *pleasure*!

Vacillation in Schopenhauer and Fechner. Both fail to recognise that the ethical and the worldprinciple lie together in the range upon which the "pleasure — pain" range is dependent, in the "good — evil" range. The "pleasure — pain" range runs parallel with it, but its relationship to it is however of a secondary nature.

How does desire relate to *life*? Life demands *desire*!

Desire is to *life* as punishment to guilt (as pain to death).

Punishment is to guilt as desire to worth, as desirelessness to worthlessness.

The human will is *not* driven by pleasure; it is driven by that which others, and myself, have called *worth*, life or existence or reality. Pleasure is *bound* to this worth, and is never attained directly, but only through it.

Woman reaches so far as *desire*, but not to worth. She reaches so far as sympathy, but not to respect. High regard for man: "moral" argument for masculine women?

As with desire and worth, so is the sun to the stars.

Desire and worth are, on the deepest level, identical. They meet in the concept of the *Good*. And the Good is *God*!

In the relation to the ethical, chance is overcome.

To know through classification is still immoral.

Boredom and impatience are the most immoral feelings that can be. For, in them, man sets time *real*: he wants it to pass without *him* having to fill it, without it being the mere

outward *form* of his inner freedom and extension, mere form in which he has sought to actualise himself; but rather, as independent from him, and he dependent on it. At the same time boredom is the need to annul time *from outside*, and longing for the devil's wonders.

Just as a harsh noise or a foul stench, of which I myself am the cause, does not so pain me as when another has caused it, so one can also think that God Himself must not suffer at all under the ill and evil of the world, nor could, as it is only there, where he himself had *actively* turned away, but is therewith also indeed fully there.

Through *grace*, the temporal necessarily enters into relation with the timeless, eternity, freedom.

The expression of this relation-condition is, most generally, faith. Through this relation time is declared, not for nonsense, but rather it obtains a *meaning*: And it surely cannot hold a meaning other than through relation to the timeless.

The psychological expression of this general meaning of time is called: *courage*! It is the direct effect of grace with reference to time (non-positing all other compulsions), as faith is the direct effect of grace without reference to the same.

As in the present, so also in eternity are space and time separated. *Eternity* is the *meaning* of the present.

The present is to eternity as the origin of things (before the Fall) to the end, as the goal (redemption from the Fall).

This is why the child has only the present.

Age and eternity hang together.

The old man has only *eternity*.

The way of gamblers.

The old man that becomes childish: He has not grasped the meaning of life.

Only the man can *stride*.

All compassion means wanting pleasure above all, and is therefore immoral, because pleasure becomes directly strived for in the compassion, instead of worth.

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

Compassion is *immoral* (not to mention the foundation of morality) because it stays within the "pleasure- suffering" range, not within the "worth - nothingness" range, to which it is functionality tied. (Pleasure is dependent on conditions, worth is not dependent on conditions.) Here the pain is indeed directly seen, but negated; and pleasure *directly* willed, instead of affirming *worth*, as in *respect*.

Cruelty means: to want to make pain *real* (as a sole reality), instead of placing pleasure with "freedom-worth".

Schopenhauer (whose Nirvana is as the only real, suffering-free, victory over *one's own cruelty*) and

Fechner are opposites *within the same* progression. As the nature of the world, both only ever find the pleasure and pain elements. Fechner is just the reverse of Schopenhauer; for the one pain was the real, and for the other, pleasure.

All cruel men have a peculiarly painful face; because their being simply means *the condition of pain*. Even the ascetic (Pascal).

Impudence: for disrespect of something.

Courage is the correlate of truth. *It is the respect-for-nothing of Nothing.*

Cowardice is the consideration-for-something of Nothing.

Jewishness, meanness, and stupidity. The Jew is to moral, what stupidity is to intellectual. He is the fly that flays the donkey bloody.

Time is yet superior to space.

Travel is immoral, since it wants to be the annulment of space in space.

The Jew as parody of the old man.

Mind in all actions; doubt in murder. There is also killing that is just (Mime*).

Dualism as duplication through externalisation of the psychological.

Bringing about an accident, which becomes a known object of humor, is villainous.

Every association speaks to a process in the Universe.

Telepathy is apperception.

Morality is assigned to the heart, the intellect to the head.

Illness is a special case of neurasthenia.

Neurasthenia and illness: becoming passive towards what is sensed in the space outside the body: neurasthenia; in the space within the body: illness.

Desert — Mirage — dream.

Ignus fatuus[†]: loss of identity of the river.

Thirst for fame and immortality.

Thirst for fame is *connectedness* in time and in space.

Between immortality and morality there can be nothing. Therefore all cultures will again be swept away.

Only the *Good* exists.

Illness and loneliness are related.

The cheat is related to the pathological liar. He *deceives* through his physical body: swindler.

All evil is one, in time and space.

The owner of a dog is he who has nothing doggish in him. That is why he *has* a dog. He has the doggish from outside.

Cremation is dionysian, burial is apollonian.

The resurrection of the flesh will not be affected by burning.

* Mime is a character in Wagner's "Ring".
[Trans]

[†] A will-o'-the-wisp or *ignis fatuus* are atmospheric ghost lights seen by travellers at night, especially over bogs, swamps or marshes. [Trans]

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

The vain man is sensitive in equally high measure. So if he did not *want* to be watched, then one would not look through one's fingers.

The genius can have no brother *of* genius, can have no sister *of* genius . . .

Not only the good is *one* in man, but also the satanic. Every victory of the good in a man helps all others — and the reverse.

God is the *idea* of salvation, of health. If we want, so is the idea, so is God with us.

The doppelgänger* is the ensemble of all evil characteristics of the I. Every particular fear is only a part of this fear, the fear of the doppelgänger.

Lying is always inertia. Has not the historian an inverse relationship to the lie?

The mirror is the *surrogate* for self-creation. It has a relationship to vanity as much as to individuality.

The criminal is hyperaemic (animal), the neurasthenic anaemic and greenish-yellow (plant).

The problem of individuality is the problem of vanity. That there are many souls, is the result of vanity. The criminal is vain, because he desires uniqueness. One needs the audience, the theatre, the pose. Thereby the second man arises. Thereby the criminal is homosexual.

Genius is either inverted crime or inverted illness (especially inverted insanity).

The artist more easily creates something inferior than the philosopher, since he is more dependent on the moment than the other.

* In German folklore, a doppelgänger (lit. "double-goer"), is a wraith or apparition of a living person, as distinguished from a ghost. The concept of the existence of a spirit double, an exact but usually invisible replica of every man, bird, or beast, is an ancient and widespread belief. To meet one's double is a sign that one's death is imminent. [Trans]

If the blockhead Schiller, instead of the rubbish of his beautiful-sounding, conveniently-moralizing phrase: "Shared joy is doubled joy — shared pain is halved pain!" had spoken: "Man can share happiness, pain never!" then he would have said something true.

That Goethe had a high opinion of Schiller naturally proves nothing at all, since he also held Wieland, Byron, and a number of painters of his time, in very high regard, and there wasn't much to them either.

Hercules is *doric*. Doric and Ionic must become sharply separated in Hellenism. They are related like poverty to wealth, like frugality to affluence.

The most pious work of art that I know is the "Farnese Hercules" (in the Naples museum). It is more pious than the Hercules saga itself, and has an eternally moving effect. The "Farnese Bull" appears alongside it as an expression of talent.

That one could mention the Raphael-esque filth next to Michaelangelo, I comprehend; one would well always do this, since Raphael is understood totally *without* genius, and Michaelangelo only *through* genius. The latter makes every consideration for the observer, the former, none at all.

Raphael is wholly impotent when he seeks to depict God, Christ, or philosophy. He helps himself by renouncing character from the outset; then one calls this originality and praises it over against Michaelangelo. Raphael never dared to allow a subject to be shown entirely from the back, least of all God himself (as Michelangelo had done in the second ceiling painting of the Cistine).

To know *who* Michaelangelo and *what* Raphael is, one compares a less significant painting, the "Flood" of the former, with one of the most outstanding of the latter, the "Fire in the Borgo". These are very well suited on account of the homologous content and because, from Michaelangelo, there are no other representations of masses available.

Raphael paints here a group, there another, piece by piece, each concerned with something different; the unity is completely lack-

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

ing. Michaelangelo immediately grasps the *essence* of the matter: he paints the *flood*, the event itself in its most elemental force, and thence gives himself to all else, every repercussion on the people, that precisely here, *must preclude* every individuation.

Freedom and Universality — Might and Universality.

Thereby the neurasthenic detests anthropocentricity.

The neurasthenic wants limitation and therefore no power.

The highest moment is God.

Oneness and Totality are thus problematic. The neurasthenic renounces Totality, the criminal Oneness. The neurasthenic is too weak for Totality, the criminal for Oneness.

Lack of *Oneness* in the sea! Totality is here; but Oneness is missing.

That is why the criminal splinters himself and renounces Oneness of consciousness.

Recovery means: to bind oneself again with the All. Illness means aloneness.

The river has no Totality.

The swamp is the *false* Totality of the river and the sham-victory over itself.

The north German is constituted too much by the idiosyncratic *north German* plain. The Islander, the Norwegian, the Scot, and to a degree the English also, are more similar to the south German than to the north German.

Sharp contrast also in Nature: the most fruitful European regions and the *nearby* volcanoes, the frightful lava — the excrement of the earth.

The *older* a man is, the *more* he look into the future, not only into the past. The child has no relationship at all to its future.

Is the sea because of the rivers or the rivers because of the sea? Who would want to decide that?

So is the relationship between God and mankind. The sea wills the rivers, the river wills the sea.

With regard to landscapes I have the greatest appreciation for vistas and for the All, to which the

Earth expands, for the opening, behind which one sees into the vastness, for music that trumpets (Trovatore and Lohengrin, Jubilarian): *Entry*.

Solar system and fixed-star sky have a different relationship to space. The stars twinkle from the edge of space. It is well sure that the stars are more moral than the sun; here is still more flung to nothing (e.g., glow, polychromy), the position become still more exclusive, still more confined; and exactly for that reason, at the same time broader, greater, more comprehensive.

The stars laugh no more, they no longer desire relationship, only happiness and joy. They lack *physicality*.

Vomiting is to diarrhoea as disgust to fear.

Among the remarkable things about fire is also that it needs oxygen to burn, exactly like its enemy, life. That's why life and flame are so often compared.

The *purifying* effect of fire suggests that even this element is in service of the good.

Snake and dog are akin.

Rabies is the *charge* levied by the dog against the master.

The sin of the bird is lightness, overcoming gravity without settling.

The dog is that criminal which continually seeks to *refute the other* to justify himself (barking!).

He can only do that by being slave to a master.

Illness is subordination of the body — crime subordination of the soul.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Even short-sightedness must let itself be healed, if one would understand its causes.

The greatest criminal always dies from heart-attack (terror).

The problem of the sick man is the problem of opportunity.*

The problem of the criminal is the problem of time.

The problem of animal psychology is the problem of chance, the problem of externalisation; because in the moment that the fly-like in me becomes unconscious - which means that I become unfree towards it - the fly appears, over against feeling that I am *unfree*; yet in the same moment *opportunity*† is there.

The body is not immoral, but the skin is. It is the danger to the body, the place where it knows space, is vulnerable, where it can be dirtied, and infected.

Space arises through making a real into not-reality, just as with illness (through giving up a part of the I to the outside, incapacity for Totality).

Time (crime) is the *setting-as-real* of the not-real: separating a past that has been given power, and a future over which no power is wanted, from the present, which is no longer eternity ... Just as with crime: setting as real, *materializing* something *unconscious* (of an animal).

All animals are criminal, *even* the horse, *even* the swan (aimless beauty, never flies anywhere): *there is a fear of the swan*.

The *sea*: (attempt of the rivers to attain Totality? The Caspian Sea speaks for that.) In any case there are *stations* of the river and *resting points*.

The sea under clouds: That is the ocean, the Black Sea, the North Sea. — Nietzsche's face: Here are the heaviest, blackest, downright darkest portentous clouds: *incapacity* for cheerfulness.

The neurasthenic seeks artificial Totality, in that he goes to the sea; the criminal seeks artificial Oneness. (Totality from *outside*, Oneness from *outside*).

The neurasthenic has too a present (*temporal*; the criminal has no present).

Nothing *can* be so beautiful as man; nothing so ugly!

The *danger* to a river is becoming a swamp. The danger to a sea? Whirlpools.

A possibility in the sea corresponds with *insanity*.

Swamp and ignus fatuus.‡

The clouds obscure the light. The Eternal embraces it.

Violet: *undecided between good and evil, between pleasure and pain*.

The snake is actually not in the stricter sense ugly. It is smooth; and yet seizes us with a disgust for it: *lie!*

Every animal has a countenance in which one discovers some kind of human emotion, a drive, a passion, a human weakness or a baseness.

The tortoise always gives a *tired* impression. It is askew and stretched-out on the ground, doomed to crawling; and thereby *ungainly*.

Eudyptes chrysocoma§ is for me a problem. (An animal that is not vain and yet knows pain.)

The bird is the apollonian animal?

Just as one finds all possible combinations in the human realm, so also in the animal realm: fish that fly; birds that swim; mammals that fly; mammals that can swim.

Why can man not fly? Why does he fly in dreams?

* Night fire. See earlier footnote. [Trans]

* *Raum*: room or space. [Trans]

† *Raum*: room or space. [Trans]

§ A species of penguin in the Tierra del Fuego Islands and in Patagonia. [Artur Gerber]

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

Further transitions between animals and plants: sponge, coral.

The snake suffers severely in the cold. Death from outside. Realisation of chance. Absolute night, without hope.

Fish are characterised by the complete *lack* of all *expressive* capacity.
"Idiocy" and fish.

Deer: weakness and cowardice. It is not beautiful in and of itself.

Snake and absolute *certainty* of striking. It hits sure and straight, *kills* when it bites. The problem of justice is here the problem of chance! — The snake is the *aggressive* lie, it lies in wait, slithers through between people. It lies outwardly. — Cowardly lie? Lie inwardly.

The plant is illness. Here is *Oneness* (no cell walls), but no Totality due to lack of sense organs and motility (intellect, will); the plant is entirely spatially dependent, which means: confined to a spot, spatially *unfree*.

The animals and plants are not dead in man, but have become unconscious in him, and which he now encounters as unfreedom in perceptions.

The ape is the man who makes a fool of himself: one sees in him the sadness over it.

It is neurasthenic to feel oneself guilty before Nature.

When medication works, it is merely the will, the belief, the hope, that works.

Constipation is indicative of being charged with mental and bodily *impurity*, without being directly expressed in a lasting pain. Diarrhoea is the releasing of all the waste; it relates to constipation like *mishap* to *discomfort*; it is symbolic for de-routing, chaotisation of the whole person. — It is why an artificial induced diarrhoea (especially through the most purgative agent, calomel) can, as known, protect from epilepsy: Diarrhoea conducts by other means what would

otherwise remain stuck and bring the individual to fall.

Fever and fear: struggle against evil; here it is overcome.

Man is animal and not plant, because the moral (good and evil, creation and murder) is the final thing; that is why *blood* (red) and *sky* (blue) are contrasted in animals; not green — brown (Earth?), not health — illness.

Astrology has a future that rests upon incarnation; character can be constructed out of the constellation of stars.

Narrowness of consciousness = Time = Unconsciousness: because the strength for Oneness is missing.

1 : 2 : 3 = Form (idea, man): Matter (woman): Thing (child, empiricism).

Matter is divisible: it lies in the number 2. All results, all syntheses are trinities: they lie in the number 3.

Space is related to chaos; its nature persists in the *setting of distance* (illness and aloneness are related), the three dimensions *fly apart from one another*, space has no Oneness, it is the entirety of all externalisation of perception, the *whole* I as unconsciousness.

Nostalgia is wishing to be a *child* (i.e., seeing one's own fault as a misfortune inflicted by others, which the criminal never does, who always feels himself guilty).

Where the Oneness of consciousness is absent, as in the criminal, solitude is absent ("The I senses itself", Rappaport), the *sense* of time is absent (because the different fragments of the I, unreality, nothingness, are set as real, become realized).

The holy man (i.e., the opposite of the criminal, *Christ*, *Augustine*, *Kant*) suffers most deeply from the problem of time. The Greeks know no holy men, so they know no problem of time.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Nature is immoral when a man dissolves himself in Nature, becomes animal, plant, matter, and nothingness, and so becomes unconscious; Nature becomes moral, ethical, aesthetic as soon as he is *conscious* of it, i.e., it becomes held together. Then is a sense for Nature possible.

The criminal dies *from the inside* (time), the sick from *outside* (space).

Epilepsy must likewise be connected with time.

Whoever lies, is not.

The snake and wisdom (veneration).

When the one is in a fog, which another knows very well as such, and beholds a fearful form (King

of the elves), so is the other person mentally aware. And it is beautiful. He is free! To the other — unconscious — it is hideous, a threat to freedom, fearful.

The creaking of a room is unconsciously become inner fragmentation.

The old maid is the *nothing* that arises from the woman, whom the man, who created her, no longer meets with, for ethical reasons. So no child ensues. She goes completely to ruin.

Theft is the making real of the not-real or the incorporation of things into the I that do not belong to the I.

The lie says by its very definition, next to best, what is immoral: the making real of the *unreal*, or equally: incorporation into the I, where it must not take place.

The moon (Luna) is the *externalised dream*. The sleep-walker is the platonic idea of the dreamer.

Fear of mosquitos is the other side of the love for birds.

It is noteworthy: to the criminal, nothing happens.

The criminal overcomes fear through hate, not through love. Since hate also overcomes fear.

Whoever loves dogs, not cats, has nothing dog-like, i.e.: he is aware of the dog-like in himself, he embraces it like other things, loves it, creates it anew, lives in it, attends to it.

The criminal liar dies from the inner, the occasional liar from the outer (spatial) snake-bite. But the criminal has the hallucination of the snake-bite and dies from mistaken fight.

The moral is always above the intellectual; for the sorcerer can know everything, but not the *good*

(God, the *idea*).

The psycho-physical parallelism becomes gradually more complete:

My lack of *strength*.

The weak, and weaklings in regard to morality, embody feeble strength and courage: Jew and strength, woman and strength.

Does it depend on the strength of a man, whether he gets sons or daughters?

I consider now, which light falls on hopes of finding a simple rule of Nature by which sex is regulated. Surely this also stands under an ethical principle. But there cannot be a biological rule of Nature for a process, that deals with either the incarnation of a soul or the development of an evasive, delusion- and lie-painting act, as woman is. And it can at the very least be influenced experimentally by other factors. This applies again for *men*. Intervention is quite impossible here.

Just as unthinkable is a mechanical principle for the prevalence of the manly birth.

Sex: moreover, is often only dependent on the man.

Man and woman — Something and Nothing.

Here is the key for the problem of sex-determining cause.

The inner equivocality of the Jew is not to be confused with the chaos of the criminal.

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

And whoever, still even now, doesn't know what is unjewish and what is jewish, of the immersing oneself in the just-to-life awakening Adam of Michelangelo (in from the alter wall, about the fourth painting in the middle row, in the Sistine chapel), in whom everything is still as a possibility, but also all possibilities effectively exist — with the exception of one: Judaism!

The Jew is from on the beginning; and yet can he also signify no end. He is *between* beginning and end. But beginning and end mean "action". The Jew knows about business, not action.

The Jew is *too urgently* against Christ. Christ is not bestride a donkey for no reason. Donkey cult with Jews. The Jew is the punishment of the donkey: he is not at all stupid. That the Jews alike incarnate in Germany is connected with the "Michel".^{*} The Jew has all evil traits yet in a conscientious form: He smiles like the stupidity, of which he is an ethical correlate. Stupidity smiles over wisdom; the Jew smiles over the good. In so doing he places himself next to the good.

He shows how even smiling can be immoral.

It is immoral to *ask*, to *plead*.

Howling storm in Macbeth: fate *triumphs* and *devours* man.

The man who fails in his suicide? He is the complete criminal, because he wants life so as to rage against it. *All evil is rage!*

Vanity means: to want to count in the worth of the I what does not belong in the worth of the I. So too the individuality. These take as their credit what is God's credit.

The greater the work of art, the less chance can be there.

The criminal has no need of witnesses. Since he hopes to win through criminal means, and is disadvantaged. That's why he must *kill all witnesses*. They are all his *Doppelgänger*.

Joy of the criminal over *every* crime.

The holy man smiles, without knowing why. He *smiles unfree*. The holy man is the unhappiest, even though he only seeks happiness.

The corpse belongs to God and not to the devil.

The devil is the man, *who has all but the Good*, who *knows* the whole of heaven without Truth, while *all is only through the Good*.

Every man creates his woman, perhaps two women for himself: one prostitute, one mother.

Whether he makes her into a mother or not? It depends only on his relationship to the ethical.

Could woman be the sphinx?

No more pitiful nonsense and *impression*:

One is driven to find something behind the woman, because one would rather wait for all else, than that *there's simply nothing there*. And so one comes upon the idea of identifying her with the sphinx, with which she actually has no similarity whatsoever.

Christ redeemed Magdalene — she *was* a prostitute, so long as *he . . . was in the wilderness*.

How can I accuse woman after all, for serving man? Man wants nothing other than her. There is no man who would not be happy when he exercises sexual effect upon a woman.

Hatred against woman is always only the not yet overcome hatred of one's own sexuality.

Innocence is ignorance. Knowing without ~~guilt~~ would be the highest.

* "The German Michel" from a German play called "Das Kalte Herz". "The deutsche Michel" is the plain, honest, muchenduring, but slow German. [Trans]

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

From things does man understand his own method and substantiation is *atonement*.
nature. Every *realization* is *redemption*, Every *realization* is *rebirth*.¹⁵¹

“Hypocrisy or Merely Contradiction?” (n.d.)

A brief look at the Life and Work of Karl Kraus

By Jessica Van Campen

(The Undergraduate Review, SUNY)

Throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century, Austria underwent tremendous economic, social and political changes. As a new form of government grew on the horizon posing a threat to the long established Habsburg Empire, a number of intellectuals began to transform Austrian life. Vienna, the center of the territory ruled by the Habsburg monarchy, was the site where Social Democrats and Liberals formed and touted new ideas that promised higher living standards.

Amidst transitions in political and social reform developed overwhelming aesthetic appreciation. Though fine art, theater, architecture, poetry, literature and music had been the focal point of the upper and middle classes all along, transformations in aesthetics were occurring. Modernism was replacing the conventional notions. New ideals were romanticized by many second generation *nouveaux riches*, and instead of striving for high political office or a superior role in commerce, they lived the life of artists. Often this bohemian life-style was supported financially by the family and one was allowed ample time to create rather than worry about an income.

These individuals who provided a diversion for society were often admired, however they were not always liked. One writer in particular who quickly joined the ranks of Vienna's acerbic satirists was Karl Kraus (b. 1874). Most of his focus was on criticism of people and events, as well as fallacies in political and social elements of *fin de siècle* Vienna. When examining the life and work of Karl Kraus, the question arises whether he was a man who sought reform through conservatism (in language) and liberalism (in the realm of women's liberation and pacifism), or merely a sardonic wit who relished pointing out the evil and hypocrisy in the world.

Kraus found his societal niche along with many other struggling composers, composers, artists, and writers of the time in the coffee house. It was here where dilettantes and true artists alike found refuge from a censorious world. Cafe Griensteidl was considered the primary sanctuary for the intelligentsia most removed from society, either by personal choice or societal pressures. Here, those who fled public criticism joined those who wanted to be surrounded by artists. It served as the ideal location where one could have a cup of coffee while looking over various papers available without having to purchase any of them. It was a more convenient place for people to write, sketch, and think than were the typically shabby, over-

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

crowded apartments of the struggling middle and lower class. For some, the cafe was a permanent address where they received mail. Most important in many cases was the exposure to a progressive society. It was a place where ideas were formed and came to fruition, and the minds of the Stammgäste (patrons) were stimulated by debate and a constant flow of thinking.

Alfred Polgar, essayist and critic, best describes the social climate of a coffee house that served as a haven for many in his essay "Theory of Cafe Central." In his essay, he examines the social climate of the cafe, which became the primary haunt in place of the Cafe Griensteidl. "Cafe Central," begins Polgar, "is indeed a coffee house unlike any other. It is instead a world view and one, to be sure, whose innermost essence is not to observe the world at all" (Segel 1933:267). He describes the patrons as those who have a deep animosity towards society, yet a need to be amidst people. There is a hatred and envy felt for others in the cafe, but it mingles with adoration. Mutual respect is felt between those who frequent the cafe because they are all there for the same reason: to kill time before it kills them.

Karl Kraus wrote similarly uncomplimentary essays on the cafe lifestyle. In 1896, his essay "Die Demolierte Literatur" ("The Demolished Literature") appeared in the Wiener Rundschau in response to the Cafe Griensteidl being burned to the ground. The essay was a mock obituary which lamented the loss of the intellectual oasis, and raised the question as to where literati would now go. Kraus did not hesitate to satirize the fear that with the loss of the cafe, its patrons would simply vanish. However, they simply relocated to Cafe Central, and Kraus followed. The work not only exhibits his satirical talent and the animosity that he felt for his contemporaries, but also the fact that he thrived on the love-hate relationship he had with many people. Though he eventually formed this rapport with most of Vienna, it did nothing to impede his success as a satirist. Kraus defined this relationship best himself when he wrote: "I and my public understand each other very well: it does not hear what I say, and I don't say what it wants to hear" (Zohn 1976:33).

Like many literati, Kraus was the son of a successful businessman, was financially supported by his family, and had the opportunity to do what he wished. When Kraus was three years old, his family moved from Jicin (Bohemia) to Vienna. Despite the fact that Kraus found the noise of the city intolerable, and felt a great anxiety about the busy streets, he made it his home until his death in 1936. Kraus first attended the University of Vienna in 1892, where he studied law under the advisement of his father. After two years, with the support of his father, he switched to philosophy and Germanistic. After six years at the University, Kraus left without having attained a degree. Shortly after that time, he left home, and with the

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

financial support of his father founded his own magazine, *Die Fackel* (The Torch).

On the first day of April in 1899, the city of Vienna was literally made to see red. A small journal with a bright red cover and a sketch of a torch circulated for the first time. After two weeks, demand for the periodical rose to 30,000 copies. Kraus' original intention was for the magazine to appear three times a month, but this frequency varied. It remained in existence until four months before Kraus' death in 1936, totaling thirty-seven volumes and over 30,000 pages, only a fraction of which can be credited to anyone other than Kraus alone.

In all thirty-seven volumes, Kraus spoke with unrelenting truth and wisdom concerning the amalgamation of Viennese issues. Taking no pains to avoid insulting thousands of readers, Kraus attacked other publications (in particular the *Neue Freie Press*), political leaders, artists, and authors while always understating the entirety of each issue to its fullest. His satires and stinging opinions were based on knowledge, insight, and research most often (and ironically) carried out in *Cafe Central*. Kraus' precocious attitude towards public life did not impede his success. Despite the fact that sales of *Die Fackel* dropped after the first few years, sales in 1911 rose to approximately thirty-four thousand copies for each issue, and remained so until his death.

Success was not the primary concern of Karl Kraus; rather, it was perfection. He was known to sit for hours hovering over daily newspapers and magazines. When he had read every bit of news available, he would begin his arduous task of clipping out the articles that captured his attention, and pasting each one to a large sheet of paper. On each sheet he would painstakingly document his sardonic attacks in a minuscule scrawl, one that was nearly indecipherable for most, including his printer. Kraus worked throughout the night, and after each printing he would insist on editing it himself so as not to miss a single flaw. With a few exceptions, *Die Fackel* contained only polemical and satirical essays by Kraus. This was due to the high fees demanded by those he wished would write for him, as well as the need to have full control over his periodical.

Because Kraus was financially independent, only very few advertisements appeared in his periodical, and these only in the very beginning. Kraus detested partiality of the press, and hoped to remain neutral. The irony is that his essays were extremely opinionated and kept him in constant debate with the public. More ironic is Kraus' overall view of the press in general. He considered journalism "the goiter of the world" (Zohn 1976:72) while he himself was a journalist. This could be easily deemed as hypocrisy, but becomes clearer when taking into consideration what Kraus hated about journalism. The primary motivation behind his strong feelings about the press was that he felt the standards of writing were plummeting.

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

Sloppy journalism full of clichés and plagiarism was rampant and Kraus aimed to inform the public of such atrocities. Kraus believed in informing the public rather than overwhelming it with propaganda. As aforementioned he tried to eliminate such propaganda by excluding advertisements from *Die Fackel*. Another journalistic form which Kraus deplored was the *feuilleton*. This French form of writing only recently introduced to Vienna was a section of the newspaper that could be removed easily and then circulated. The style was informal with no distinct form, and the topics discussed ranged from political events to theatrical reviews. Most often the author's personnel opinions were portrayed, often politically charged, always awaiting debate. Felix Salten, Leo Ebermann and Arthur Schnitzler are just a few contemporaries of Kraus who praised the style of the *feuilleton*. It was an insider of the café where they congregated who launched a serious campaign against the literary form.

Kraus thought its language base and lacking in literary value. He even went as far as to attack the grammar of particular writers while harshly criticizing their work. One such example was his hostile review of Felix Salten which instigated the latter to physically attack his critic. Kraus strongly believed in language not only expressing truth, but being used in its most authentic form. Consequently he maintained that the *feuilleton* aided in the destruction of language. Criticism of authors of this genre included his opinion that by writing the *feuilleton* the author was forced to forsake his true talent; this would result in the downfall of the writer, the language and eventually society (Timms 1986:40). The animosity Kraus felt for fellow writers was often misunderstood. His prime nemesis was the previously mentioned Felix Salten, the very successful author of *Bambi* (1923). Many maintained that Kraus' abhorrence of Salten was simply jealousy expressed as derision. However, Kraus had a more urgent reason, for it was Salten who was one of the most notable *feuilletonists* in Vienna. In 1914 Salten became the *feuilletonist* for the Sunday edition of the *Neue Freie Presse*. This position put him in the forefront of wartime propaganda as well as on the top of Kraus' list of enemies. Kraus had not only anti-*feuilleton* sentiments, but anti-war ones as well.

The outrage that Kraus evoked in many of his readers rarely matched his critics. The fact was that Kraus' aphorisms rang true. His agenda to reveal the truth was not limited to social-political events expressed in essays, for Kraus was also a poet and a playwright. His most noted play was "*Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*" (*The Last Days of Mankind*) which dramatizes "man's inhumanity to man" (Zohn 1986:13). Within the play linger multiple aphoristic analyses concerning life, politics and in particular World War I. The work is a montage of scenes and characters varying from wounded army officers in hospitals, to prostitutes in coffee houses. It is composed of five acts and two hundred and nine scenes that include dia-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

logue depicting brutality, harshness, fatality, and desperation associated with wartime. Phrases such as "Seberien muss Strebien" ("Serbians must die") and "Jeder Russ ein Schuss, jeder Franzos ein Stoss, jeder Britt ein Tritt" (" [For] every Russian a shot, every Frenchman a push, every Brit a step") are chorused throughout the play (Zohn 1971:72). The words are manipulated into rhyming which further increases the sense of brutality by giving it a sing-song effect, despite the harsh message. Written between 1915 and 1917, it was obviously a pacifistic statement by Kraus, a plea of sorts expressing his fear of an apocalypse and his loathing of the military.

Kraus' aggressive expression of his attitude toward life casts a haze over his peaceful demeanor which surfaces in his writings. His poetry however, is eloquent and conveys a great deal of tenderness and anxiety that he felt toward life. Some of his poems enlighten one to his preoccupation with death and the end of existence. Such an example is "Hour of the Night" in which Kraus laments time's flight in the context of a day, a year and a lifetime. The first two lines of each stanza exemplify this by reading "Hour of night time, fleeing from me,/ While I am conceiving, reflecting, and weighing" (Ungar 1977:240). Another example of Kraus' submissive attitude toward death is in the last stanza of "Beneath the Waterfall"

Far behind me is all the woe and weakness. How constant is the water-fall; How does this sunny land bless all My crowding thoughts before night's darkness. (Ungar 1977:258)

Here the publicly bitter, unrelenting critic of society exposes his peaceful reflections on the inevitable. Kraus did not simply lash out at those who posed a threat to himself or his beliefs. He was not against the world for the sake of being so while sitting in the midst of a society that he took pleasure in tearing to shreds. Kraus praised those whom he admired and supported those who he thought deserved success. A beneficiary of Kraus' benevolence was Peter Altenberg. In 1815 S. Fischers publishing house in Berlin released the first print of Altenberg's *Wie ich es sehe* (How I see it). It was a selection of writings that Kraus had collected from Altenberg's possessions and then secretly sent to be published. The work was an immediate success, and despite the terrible condition of his nervous system and failing mental health, Altenberg continued writing until his death in 1919. Throughout the time of Altenberg's worsening health and repetitive institutionalization, Kraus remained a very close friend, at one point organizing funds to pay for his comrade's outstanding medical bills. Though this does not prove that Kraus' feelings for others, namely Salten, were not jealousy, it does force one to consider other rational explanations for Kraus' animosity. Kraus respected the work of Altenberg, and this was essential in their friendship. Although Kraus attacked contradictions and hypocrisy in the world, there were several in his own microcosm. In his

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

essay "Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität ("Morality and Criminality"), Kraus demanded that the views toward sex and gender differences be reviewed and reformed. He argued that the private lives of people should remain just that, private. He also argued that women should be protected by the law and not victimized by the creators of law, primarily men. Kraus was a fervent advocate of gender equality and criticized those who were against the women's movement. In another work however, Kraus maintained that women were of lesser intellectual capability and that they were simple creatures driven by emotions. The complementarity between men and women was the reason for their union. Aside from the tremendous contradiction this poses, one must look at the personal life of Kraus.

The two people who made the greatest impressions on Kraus' life were women, Annie Kalmar and Baroness Sidonie Nadhery. His relationships with them were the most steadfast and fulfilling of any of his other alliances. The brief relationship between Kalmar and Kraus grew out of the theater of which she was part of and ended in her death of tuberculosis in 1901, a year after they had met. Ten years later, he met Sidonie Nadhery and their love affair is documented in thousands of letters that Kraus wrote to her between 1913 and 1936. After years of traveling with one another and frequent visits to her estate, she married aristocrat Max Thun und Hohenstein. After only a few months, the marriage disintegrated and she and Kraus joined one another again. Despite their relationship and Kraus' several proposals, they never married for class reasons. Kraus was to die a man who had never joined in holy matrimony. Karl Kraus lived a life full of contradiction, but not one of hypocrisy. His constructionist attempts such as the annihilation of corruption and ignorance, the education of the public and the spreading of the truth may have been in vain, but it was certainly not hypocritical. He was not simply a bitter, lonely man who lashed out at the world. By examining the work and life of Kraus it becomes difficult to dispute the number of altruistic intentions that Kraus had and has left behind. Perhaps he knew his view when he wrote:

"Let my style capture all of my time. This should make it an annoyance to my contemporaries. But later generations should hold it to their ears like a shell in which there is a music of an ocean of mud" (Zohn 1976:55).

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Kraus and Weininger

Kraus is famous for being a fervent admirer of Otto Weininger. Like Weininger, Kraus had a complex attitude towards feminism and contemporary culture, and did not believe that women and men could easily become politically or intellectually equal. For both, women symbolized the primeval power of sexuality and both argued that contemporary culture was effeminate and degenerate. Weininger's *Sex and Character* also served Kraus as an Anti-Freud-Compendium, an antidote against psychoanalysis. Weininger's theory of the ineffable, microcosmic genius endeared him to Kraus and his followers, who were infuriated by the "reductionist" and "pansexualist" analyses of great works of art that were being attempted by the more unrestrained disciples of Freud.

Kraus himself described his age as a "vaginal epoch", a phrase that Weininger would surely have appreciated - for formlessness in art, language, and character. Kraus and his journal fought for a masculine reorientation of culture, an impeccably Weiningerian goal. Culture and civilization, argued a typical essay in *Die Fackel*, had been created by males. Women had advanced or impeded cultural development solely by stimulating or inhibiting male efforts; their role in society was exclusively erotic and aesthetic. Unlike Weininger, however, the Fackel circle esteemed female sensuality, which Kraus himself once described as "the primal spring at which the intellectuality of man finds renewal".

Kraus agreed with Weininger that the male was intermittently sexual while the female was perpetually so. Realizing, however, that Weininger would never have stooped to using women to revitalize his intellect, Kraus penned this epigram to Weininger's memory: "An admirer of women agrees enthusiastically with your arguments for misogyny" (*Die Fackel*, no. 229). This crucial difference notwithstanding, Kraus's admiration for Weininger remained constant over the years.

Weininger's great classic *Sex and Character* might not have become so widely read and influential had it not been championed by Kraus.

Some Quotations

1. "I and my public understand each other very well: it does not hear what I say, and I don't say what it wants to hear."

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2. "When someone behaves like a beast, he says: 'After all, one is only human.' But when he is treated like a beast, he says, 'After all, one is human.'"
3. "The secret of the demagogue is to make himself as stupid as his audience so that they believe they are as clever as he."
4. "The real truths are those that can be invented."
5. "You don't even live once."
6. "The devil is an optimist if he thinks he can make people meaner."
7. "The world has become uglier since it began to look into a mirror every day; so let us settle for the mirror image and do without an inspection of the original."
8. "How is the world ruled and how do wars start? Diplomats tell lies to journalists and then believe what they read."
9. "Sentimental irony is a dog that bays at the moon while pissing on graves."
10. "A child learns to discard his ideals, whereas a grown-up never wears out his short pants."
11. "Education is a crutch with which the foolish attack the wise to prove that they are not idiots."
12. "Democracy divides people into workers and loafers. It makes no provision for those who have no time to work."
13. "Democracy means the opportunity to be everyone's slave."
14. "Language is the mother of thought, not its handmaiden."
15. "Matrimony is the union of meanness and martyrdom."
16. "Progress celebrates Pyrrhic victories over nature. Progress makes purses out of human skin. When people were traveling in mail coaches, the world got ahead better than it does now that salesmen fly through the air. What good is speed if the brain has oozed out on the way? How will the heirs of this age be taught the most basic motions that are necessary to activate the most complicated machines? Nature can rely on progress; it will avenge it for the outrage it has perpetrated on it."
17. "Progress, under whose feet the grass mourns and the forest turns into paper from which newspaper plants grow, has subordinated the purpose of life to the means of subsistence and turned us into the nuts and bolts for our tools."
18. "The closer the look one takes at a word, the greater the distance from which it looks back."
19. "To be sure, the dog is loyal. But why, on that account, should we take him as an example? He is loyal to man, not to other dogs."
20. "Hate must make a man productive. Otherwise one might as well love."
21. "Feminine passion is to masculine as an epic is to an epigram."
22. "A woman occasionally is quite a serviceable substitute for masturbation. It takes an abundance of imagination, to be sure."
23. "Psychoanalysis is that mental illness for which it regards itself as therapy."
24. "My unconscious knows more about the consciousness of the psychologist than his consciousness knows about my unconscious."
25. "Psychoanalysis: a rabbit that was swallowed by a boa constrictor that just wanted to see what it was like in there."
26. "Stupidity is an elemental force for which no earthquake is a match."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

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| <p>27. "I am already so popular that anyone who vilifies me becomes more popular than I am."</p> <p>28. "Christian morality prefers remorse to precede lust, and then lust not to follow."</p> <p>29. "No ideas and the ability to express them - that's a journalist."</p> <p>30. "Education is what most receive, many pass on, and few possess."</p> <p>31. "An illusion of depth often occurs if a blockhead is a muddlehead at the same time."</p> <p>32. "Curses on the law! Most of my fellow citizens are the sorry conse-</p> | <p>quences of uncommitted abortions."</p> <p>33. "To me all men are equal: there are jackasses everywhere, and I have the same contempt for them all."</p> <p>34. "A writer is someone who can make a riddle out of an answer."</p> <p>35. "Morality is a venereal disease. Its primary stage is called virtue; its secondary stage, boredom; its tertiary stage, syphilis."</p> <p>36. "Satires which the censor can understand are justly forbidden."¹⁵²</p> |
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REFERENCES ON SEX DIFFERENCES

“Excerpts from Brain Sex” (n.d.)

BRAIN SEX: The Real Difference Between Men and Women, by Anne Moir, Ph.D. and David Jessel. Dell Publishing (paperback), New York, 1992.

Men are different from women. They are equal only in their common membership of the same species, humankind. To maintain that they are the same in aptitude, skill or behaviour is to build a society based on a biological and scientific lie.

The sexes are different because their brains are different. The brain, the chief administrative and emotional organ of life, is differently constructed in men and in women; it processes information in a different way, which results in different perceptions, priorities and behaviour.

In the past ten years there has been an explosion of scientific research into what makes the sexes different. Doctors, scientists, psychologists and sociologists, working apart, have produced a body of findings which, taken together, paints a remarkably consistent picture. And the picture is one of startling sexual asymmetry.

Some researchers have been frankly dismayed at what they have discovered. Some of their findings have been, if not suppressed, at least quietly shelved because of their potential social impact. But it is usually better to act on the basis of what is true, rather than to maintain, with the best will in the world, that what is true has no right to be so.

A hundred years ago, the observation that men were different from women, in a whole range of aptitudes, skills, and abilities, would have been a leaden truism, a statement of the yawningly obvious. Such a remark, uttered today, would evoke very different reactions. Said by a man, it would suggest a certain social ineptitude, a naivete in matters of sexual politics, a sad deficiency in conventional wisdom, or a clumsy attempt to be provocative. A woman venturing such an opinion would be scorned as a traitor to her sex, betraying the hard-fought "victories" of recent decades as women have sought equality of status, opportunity and respect.

Yet the truth is that virtually every professional scientist and researcher into the subject has concluded that the brains of men and women are different. There has seldom been a greater divide between what intelligent, enlightened opinion presumes - that men and women have the same brain - and what science knows - that they do not.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Recent decades have witnessed two contradictory processes: the development of scientific research into the differences between the sexes, and the political denial that such differences exist. These two intellectual currents are, understandably, not on speaking terms. Science knows it dabbles in matters of sexual difference at its risk: at least one researcher into the field of gender differences was refused a grant on the grounds that "this work ought not be done".

At a few hours old girls are more sensitive than boys to touch. Tests between the sexes of tactile sensitivity in the hands and fingers produce differences so striking that sometimes male and female scores do not even overlap, the most sensitive boy feeling less than the least sensitive girl. When it comes to sound, infant females are much less tolerant - one researcher believes that they may "hear" noises as being twice as loud as do males. Baby girls become irritated and anxious about noise, pain or discomfort more readily than baby boys.

Baby girls are more easily comforted by soothing words and singing. Even before they can understand language, girls seem to be better than boys at identifying the emotional content of speech. From the outset of life, girl babies show a greater interest in communicating with other people. One study involves babies of only 2-4 days old. It shows that girls spend almost twice as long maintaining eye contact with a silent adult, and girls also look longer than boys when the adult is talking. The boys' attention span was the same, whether the adult was talking or not - showing a relative bias towards what they could see, rather than what they could hear. From the cradle, baby girls like to gurgle at humans. Most boys are just as talkative, but are equally happy to jabber away at cot toys or looking at abstract geometric designs. Boys are more active and wakeful than girls - the male-wired brain of activity at work.

The female bias towards the personal shows itself in other ways. At four months, most baby girls can distinguish photographs of people they know from photographs of strangers; baby boys cannot."

The brain biases persist and strengthen as children grow up, "seeing" life through that particular filter of the brain which they find easier, and more natural, to use. That bias in girls towards the personal, for instance, shows up in experiments. A group of children was given a rather special sort of sight test. They looked through a contraption rather like a pair of binoculars, which showed the left and right eye two different images at the same time. One was of an object, the other of a person. The children had been shown exactly the same images, but when asked what they had seen gave different replies. Boys reported seeing significantly more things than people, and girls more people than things.

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

As the months go by, and the child stands upright, the boys tend to show a greater interest than the girls in exploring the corners of their small world. Their greater muscle-mass helps them explore and range further than their sisters, and they make fewer journeys back to the reassuring base-camp of mother. Scientists have devised a test where a barrier is strung across the playroom, separating mother and child. The girls tended to stand at the centre of the barrier and cry; the boys made little safaris to the edge of the obstacle to see if there was a way round it.

[Under the heading "Pre-School"]

The infant sexes differ in the way they play. According to one English study, having said goodbye to their mothers at the school gates (taking an average 92.5 seconds for girls, 36 seconds for boys), boys will wheel off into the playground. There, they will play more vigorously, and occupy a much larger play-space than the girls. In the playschool classroom, the boys will be much more interested in building structures out of blocks, playing with any kind of vehicle - indeed with anything which does something, be it a door handle or an electric switch. Girls will opt for more sedentary games, and, if they build, will tend to build long, low structures while boys go for toppling height in their creations.

A newcomer to the playgroup - of either sex - will tend to be greeted with friendship and curiosity by the girls; with indifference by the boys. There is irritation if the newcomer follows the boys about; girls will tend to welcome the stranger into their group. By the age of four, boys and girls usually play apart, having instituted their own form of infant sexual segregation. Boys tend not to bother about whether or not they like any particular member of the gang - he's included if he's useful; girls exclude other girls because "they're not nice". Girls accept younger children into the group; boys tend to try to join groups of older children. Girls know and remember the names of their playmates; boys often don't.

Boys will make up stories of zap, pow and villainy. Girls' narratives focus on home, friendship, emotions; the boy will tell the story of the robber, while the girls tell the same tale from the point of view of the victim.

On measurements of various aptitude tests, the differences between the sexes in average scores on these tests can be as much as 25 percent. A difference of as little as 5 percent has been found to have marked impact on the occupations or activities at which men or women will, on average, excel.

The area where the biggest differences have been found lies in what scientists call "spacial ability". That's being able to picture things, their shape, position, geography and proportion, accurately in the mind's eye -

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

all skills that are crucial to the practical ability to work with three-dimensional objects or drawings. One scientist who has reviewed the extensive literature on the subject concludes, "the fact of the male's superiority in spacial ability is not in dispute". It is confirmed by literally hundreds of different scientific studies.

Boys also have the superior hand-eye co-ordination necessary for ball sports. Those same skills mean that they can more easily imagine, alter, and rotate an object in their mind's eye. Boys find it easier than girls to construct block buildings from two-dimensional blueprints, and to assess correctly how the angle of the surface level of water in a jug would change when the jug was tilted to different angles.

This male advantage in seeing patterns and abstract relationships - what could be called general strategic rather than detailed tactical thinking - perhaps explains the male dominance of chess, even in a country like the U.S.S.R, where the game is a national sport played by both sexes. An alternative explanation, more acceptable to those who would deny the biological basis of sex differences, is that women have become so conditioned to the fact of male chess playing superiority that they subconsciously assign themselves lower expectations; but this is a rather wilful rejection of scientific evidence for the sake of maintaining a prejudice.

The better spacial ability of men could certainly help to explain the male superiority in map-reading we noted earlier. Here again, the prejudice of male motorists is confirmed by experiment; girls and boys were each given city street maps and, without rotating the map, asked to describe whether they would be turning left or right at particular intersections as they mentally made their way across town and back. Boys did better. More women than men liked to turn the map round, physically to match the direction in which they are travelling when they are trying to find their way.

While the male brain gives men the edge in dealing with things and theorems, the female brain is organised to respond more sensitively to all sensory stimuli. Women do better than men on tests of verbal ability. Females are equipped to receive a wider range of sensory information, to connect and relate that information with greater facility, to place a primacy on personal relationships, and to communicate. Cultural influences may reinforce these strengths, but the advantages are innate.

The differences are apparent in the very first hours after birth. It has been shown that girl babies are much more interested than boys in people and faces; the boys seem just as happy with an object dangled in front of them. Girls say their first words and learn to speak in short sentences earlier than boys and are generally more fluent in their pre-school years. They read earlier, too, and do better in coping with the building blocks of language like grammar, punctuation and spelling. Boys outnumber girls 4:1 in remedial reading classes. Later, women find it easier to master foreign lan-

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

guages, and are more proficient in their own, with better command of grammar and spelling. They are also more fluent: stuttering and other speech defects occur almost exclusively among boys.

Girls and women hear better than men. When the sexes are compared, women show a greater sensitivity to sound. The dripping tap will get the woman out of bed before the man has even woken up. Six times as many girls as boys can sing in tune. They are also more adept in noticing small changes in volume, which goes some way to explaining womens' superior sensitivity to that "tone of voice" which their male partners are so often accused of adopting. Men and women even see some things differently. Women see better in the dark. They are more sensitive to the red end of the spectrum, seeing more red hues there than men, and have a better visual memory. Men see better than women in bright light. Intriguing results also show that men tend to be literally blinkered; they see in a narrow field - mild tunnel vision - with greater concentration on depth. They have a better sense of perspective than women. Women, however, quite literally take in the bigger picture. They have wider peripheral vision, because they have more of the receptor rods and cones in the retina, at the back of the eyeball, to receive a wider arc of visual input.

The differences extend to the other senses. Women react faster, and more acutely, to pain, although their overall resistance to long-term discomfort is greater than men's. In a sample of young adults, females showed "overwhelmingly" greater sensitivity to pressure on the skin on every part of the body. In childhood and maturity, women have a tactile sensitivity so superior to men's that in some tests there is no overlap between the scores of the two sexes; in these, the least sensitive woman is more sensitive than the most sensitive man."

This superiority in so many of the senses can be clinically measured - yet it is what accounts for women's almost supernatural "intuition". Women are simply better equipped to notice things to which men are completely blind and deaf. There is no witchcraft in this superior perception - it is extra-sensory only in terms of the blunter, male senses. Women are better at picking up social cues, picking up important nuances of meaning from tones of voice or intensity of expression. Men sometimes become exasperated at a woman's reaction to what they say. They do not realise that women are probably "hearing" much more than what the man himself thinks he is "saying". Women tend to be better judges of character. Older females have a better memory for names and faces, and a greater sensitivity to other people's preferences.

Sex differences have been noted in the comparative memory of men and women. Women can store, for short periods at least, more irrelevant and random information than men; men can only manage the trick when

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

the information is organised in some coherent form, or has specific relevance to them.

The hormones, as we will see, determine the distinct male or female organisation of the brain as it develops in the womb. We share the same sexual identity for only the first few weeks after conception. Thereafter, in the womb, the very structure and pattern of the brain begins to take specifically male or female form. Throughout infant, teenage, and adult life, the way the brain was forged will have, in subtle interplay with the hormones, a fundamental effect on the attitudes, behaviour, and intellectual and emotional functioning of the individual. Most neuroscientists and researchers into the mysteries of the brain are now prepared, like the American neurologist Dr Richard Restak, to make the confident assertion "it seems unrealistic to deny any longer the existence of male and female brain differences. Just as there are physical dissimilarities between male and females . . . there are equally dramatic differences in brain functioning". The way our brains are made effects how we think, learn, see, feel, smell, communicate, love, make love, fight, succeed, or fail. Understanding how our brains, and those of others, are made is a matter of no little importance.

Infants are not blank slates, on whom we scrawl instructions for sexually-appropriate behaviour. They are born with male or female minds of their own. They have, quite literally, made up their minds in the womb, safe from the legions of social engineers who impatiently await them.

In the first few weeks in the womb, the tiny foetus isn't noticeably a miniature girl or a miniature boy. It has all the basic equipment, such as vestigial ducts, tracts and so on, to develop as either sex. But as the weeks go by, the genes begin to put the message across. If things go normally, and everything follows the XY blueprint of a boy, the chromosomes will cue the development of the gonads into testes. It's now, at around six weeks, that sexual identity is finally determined - when the male foetus develops the special cells which produce the male hormones or androgens, the main one being testosterone. The hormones instruct the body not to bother with developing a feminine set of sexual equipment, while stimulating the development of embryonic male genitalia.

About the same time, if the baby is female, genetically XX, the reproductive machinery develops along female lines, produces no significant amount of male hormone, and results in a girl baby. Just as the six-week-old foetus wasn't recognisably male or female in appearance, so the embryonic brain takes some time before it begins to acquire a specific sexual identity. If the embryo is genetically female, nothing very drastic happens to the basic pattern of the brain. In broad terms, the natural template of the

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

brain seems to be female. In normal girls it will develop naturally along female lines.

In boys it is different. Just as male gender depended on the presence of male hormone, so a radical intervention is needed to change that naturally female brain structure into a male pattern. This literally mind-altering process is the result of the same process that determined those other physical changes - the intervention of the hormones.

Embryonic boy babies are exposed to a colossal dose of male hormone at the critical time when their brains are beginning to take shape. The male hormone levels then are four times the level experienced throughout infancy and boyhood. A vast surge of male hormone occurs at each end of male development: at adolescence, when his sexuality comes on stream, and six weeks after conception, at the moment his brain is beginning to take shape. But, as with the development of the rest of the body, things can go wrong. A male foetus may have enough male hormones to trigger the development of male sex organs, but these may not be able to produce the additional male hormones to push the brain into the male pattern. His brain will "stay" female, so he will be born with a female brain in a male body. In the same way, a female baby may be exposed in the womb to an accidental dose of the male hormone - we'll see later how this can happen - and end up with a male brain in a female body.

The biggest behavioural difference between men and women is the natural, innate aggression of men, which explains to a large degree their historical dominance of the species. Men didn't learn aggression as one of the tactics of the sex war. We do not teach our boy children to be aggressive - indeed, we try vainly to unteach it. Even researchers most hostile to the acknowledgement of sex differences agree that this is a male feature, and one which cannot be explained by social conditioning.

The writer H. H. Monro, "Saki", wrote an instructive little story about a liberal household where the parents sought to suppress their son's natural male aggression by refusing him a set of tin soldiers; instead, they supplied a set of tin civil servants and teachers. All, they felt, was going well, until they sneaked into the playroom and saw that he had set out a battle royal between the regiments of the toy teachers and his model bureaucrats. The child was lucky, in that his parents in the end saw the futility of trying to make him something he wasn't, nor could ever be.¹⁵³

“Review - Sex on the Brain” (n.d.)

The Biological Differences Between Men and Women

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Imagine a tropical island on which some of the girls, at adolescence, magically turn into men. Think of the scientific possibilities! Finally, we could tease apart nature and nurture and see whether men and women differed because of how they were brought up as children. As the twig is bent, we say, so grows the branch; we expect these teens to have girls' minds in boys' bodies and to suffer from a painful confusion of gender roles.

As it happens, this is not a thought experiment. In a few Dominican villages, some families carry a gene that leaves newborn boys with undescended testicles and a stunted penis resembling a clitoris. They are raised as girls until puberty, when the new rush of androgens gives them normal male genitals and a masculine body, complete with facial hair. The villagers call them *guevedoces*: "eggs [or balls]-at-12." The child switches genders, wears male clothing, begins to date, and turns into a normal man, without fuss or trauma. So much for bending the twig. Gender identity comes either from the effects of hormones on the brain or from the way people are treated as adults, or both; childhood nurture makes little difference. Balls-at-12 is just one of the fascinating discoveries brought to light in Deborah Blum's excellent book *Sex on the Brain: The Biological Differences Between Men and Women*. This is the real Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (or The Sexes). Why are there sexes? To change our biochemical locks every generation and keep a step ahead of the rapidly evolving pathogens that try to pick them. How different are men's and women's brain structures? Not very. Do raging hormones turn men into testosterone-poisoned rapists and women into weepy premenstrual husband-stabbers? No both times. Are men and women biologically different in ways other than the obvious anatomical ones? Yes--men are shorter-lived, more cerebrally lopsided, more violent, better at some spatial abilities, worse at verbal abilities, more competitive but more forgiving of their competitors, more sexually jealous, more socially obtuse, and more promiscuous (at least, they'd like to be).

Not only are we learning more about sex differences, but we also have an elegant theory to explain them. In the 1970s the biologist Robert Trivers showed how all the major differences between the sexes in the animal kingdom flow from a difference in the size of their investment in offspring. The female begins with the bigger ante--an egg that is far bigger than a sperm--and usually commits herself to even more, such as yolk; or, in mammals, blood and milk. The male contributes a few seconds of copulation and a teaspoon of semen. The number of offspring in each generation is limited by the female's contribution: one for each egg she produces and nurtures.

That has two momentous consequences. First, a single male can fertilize several females, forcing other males to go mateless. Males must compete for access to females by beating each other up, cornering the resources

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

necessary to mate, or persuading a female to choose them. Second, a male's reproductive success depends on how many females he mates with, but not vice versa; for a female, one mating per pregnancy is enough. That makes females more discriminating in their choice of sexual partners.

Humans have added some twists to the mammalian pattern. Men generally invest in their children by providing food, protection, and care. So females also compete for mates, though they look for the ones most willing and able to invest, not the ones most willing to copulate (those are never in short supply). Females, like males, may be tempted by infidelity, though their genetic motive is quality rather than quantity. A discreet adulteress can get the genes of the fittest male and the investment of the most generous male. An easily cuckolded male would devote his efforts to the genes of a competitor, which is Darwinian suicide; hence men's intense sexual jealousy.

Blum is a superb science reporter who presents just the right amount of complexity, tries to explain findings rather than just report them, and writes in a consistently clear and pleasant style. *Sex on the Brain* is such a good window on the state of the art that its only flaws are the flaws of the researchers themselves.

Unlike Robert Wright and Matt Ridley, who have also written excellent recent books on the biology of sex, Blum does not ground her own story in rigorous evolutionary biology, but rather lets the laboratory scientists speak for themselves. Unfortunately, many good bench scientists are mediocre theorists, often by choice. "Why" questions are thought to be an indulgence, appropriate only for musings over beer at the end of the day. Blum reports (and occasionally echoes) some sloppy evolutionary "explanations," including casual analogies between arbitrary species and *Homo sapiens*, the equation of evolution with progress, the idea that contemporary changes in Western society are the vanguard of future evolution, and repeatedly, the error that our adaptations are for the good of the species.

Adaptations are for the good of the genes that implement them, and one of the best demonstrations is right in Blum's territory: the 50-50 ratio of males to females. If organisms were designed to benefit the species, they would not waste half the available food on sons, who can't directly replenish the species with babies. Any necessary genetic variation could easily be supplied by a few studs. Organisms pump out sons because whenever females are more plentiful, the genes of mothers and fathers who bear sons have a reproductive field day, and the mixture settles at 50-50. If the species suffers, that's just too bad.

Blum not only fails to share these explanations, but also sometimes repeats ones that are downright wrong--such as that men die young because the species needs them less. A better explanation is that males' reproductive fate depends more strongly than females' on competing when they are

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

young. So any gene that builds a man with a strong young body at the cost of a weak old body will prosper.

Blum's informants also mislead her in their appeal to chemistry as an ultimate explanation of sex differences. Blum masterfully explains why the effects of hormones are more complicated than pop science would have us think. They are produced by several organs in both sexes, may be converted into one another, and can have varying effects in different species, sexes, and individuals. The moral is that it is not hormones themselves but the neural circuitry, shaped by natural selection and modulated by the hormones, that explains our thoughts and feelings. The role of particular hormones may be like the role of green wires in an electronic device. The answer to the question "How does the device work?" depends on which wires connect which chips, not on the fact that a given wire is green.

This undermines explanations that assume ironclad effects of hormones. Take the idea that men became less competitive because women insisted on monogamy, which lowers testosterone. Natural selection is a resourceful tinkerer and could have rewired men's brains to respond to lowered testosterone in any number of ways, not necessarily by becoming less competitive. A better answer would appeal to the tradeoffs males face between investing in their current offspring vs. competing with other males to sire new offspring with other females.

In many circles, "The Biological Differences Between Men and Women" are fighting words. It seems a short step from saying that men and women are biologically different to saying that women are inferior. Moreover, if obnoxious behavior like aggression, rape, and philandering are biological, that would make them "natural" and hence good--or at least in the genes, where they cannot be changed by social reform. The result has been an angry rejection of the research Blum reports and an attempt to disseminate a feel-good alternative in which boys and girls are identical and infinitely malleable.

Blum rejects these non sequiturs. She does recount the sexist pre-1950s research, which is occasionally hilarious (as when scientists were obsessed with testosterone, which they treated as the essence of masculinity) and sometimes tragic (as when hare-brained theories led to horrifying surgical procedures on women). Blum dismisses bad research with the right touch of scorn, but does not feel a need to neutralize it with politically palatable agitprop. She believes that science can approach the truth, and that we are best off if we know it and deal with it thoughtfully--which she does. Sex differences, she points out, offer no support to invidious stereotypes, are not a guideline for what is right, do not apply to every individual, and never justify the restriction of opportunity. The ignoble impulses of both sexes are part of a complex mind that can often override them; and social ar-

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

rangements, from individual marriages to entire legal systems, can change for the better.

*Review by Steven Pinker, who is a professor of psychology and director of the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience at MIT, and author of The Language Instinct and the forthcoming How the Mind Works.*¹⁵⁴

Guys and Dolls

IN HER LATEST BOOK, *Sex on the Brain* (Viking, \$24.95), Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Deborah Blum dives into one of the most controversial and fascinating questions in human biology: Besides the obvious, what makes men and women different? An investigative science writer best known for her book on animal testing (*The Monkey Wars*, Oxford University Press, \$25.00), Blum bases her assertions in *Sex on the Brain* -- which range from why we even have two sexes to what men and women find attractive in each other -- on interviews with experts and research into fields as diverse as evolutionary science, anthropology, animal behavior, neuroscience, psychology and endocrinology. The author recently spoke with Swoon about killer testosterone, French kisses and that elusive thing called attraction.

Swoon: "To begin with, why must there be two sexes?"

Blum: "Of course, there are animals who are hermaphroditic, but they're rare, and many of them disappear. What nature eventually decided is that one limited, self-reproducing gene pool would never be enough. The ideal is that you and your partner have very different genes and that you minimize the risk of duplicating bad genes."

"What's the news on sexual attraction between men and women?"

"We are just starting to realize that there are all these undercurrents that affect choices -- like mate selection -- that we thought were conscious. As it turns out, men send signals. One of these signals is smell. The immune system sends out smells, carried in sweat, that women seem very attracted to. In one study on sweat, men wore the same T-shirt for a number of days and women rated the smells in terms of sexiness. Very consistently, the women picked men with immune systems most different from their own. Some people think the same immune-system information is found in saliva. So, French kissing may be another way of discerning this biology."

"Is it true that men are innately more aggressive than women?"

"There is a lot of politics with that; many want to say that men and women are born equal and that differences are created by culture. However, the difference in aggression is there right from the beginning. Even prenatally, male fetuses are more active. Why is this? Early on, we were a polygamous species. In polygamous species, males tend to operate in a "live fast and die" pattern. [The males] must be on that aggressive edge at all times."

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

"Certain studies show that male animals, including humans, evince a noticeable drop in testosterone after being paired off in committed sexual relationships. Can you explain this?"

"It's really interesting that the body does this. It's like your body is naturally preparing to soften you. Perhaps women have used monogamy and partnership to control male behavior."

"In your book, you describe people as being "ambiguously monogamous." What do you mean by this?"

"Only monogamous species have long-lasting partnerships, share equally in the tasks of life and exhibit long-lasting affection. We have monogamous traits but retain many polygamous habits, such as aggression. We're in a really interesting, complex and confused state in terms of what we are looking for [in a mate]."¹⁵⁵

"Men, Women and Sex Differences" (n.d.)

The Attitudes of Three Feminists – Gloria Steinem, Gloria Allred and Bella Abzug

- By Russell Eisenman, *McNeese State University* -

A case study of how three prominent feminists responded to evidence of sex differences is presented. Interesting research on sex differences is discussed, including brain differences. Much of it is from the ABC-TV program "Boys and Girls Are Different" hosted by John Stossel. The response of feminists Gloria Steinem, Gloria Allred, and Bella Abzug would seem to fit Festinger's concept of cognitive dissonance, whereby the unpleasant effect of multiple ideas contradicting each other induces persons to rationalize the one away to preserve existing and established sets of beliefs.

This paper is a case study of how three prominent feminists responded to the cognitive dissonance induced by ideas about sex differences. Festinger (1957) developed a theory of cognitive dissonance. He says that when we have two ideas that we see as inconsistent with one another we develop a state of cognitive dissonance, which we find unpleasant. We thus try to achieve consonance. But, the consonance is often achieved by rationalizing away one of the threatening ideas. For example, the idea that (1) I smoke, and (2) smoking is dangerous, should produce cognitive dissonance. Most people in this situation would rationalize away so that they could continue to smoke, now no longer seeing smoking as dangerous, despite evidence on the dangers of smoking. For the three feminists, the cognitive dissonance would occur between the ideas that (1) they think males and females are the same (and thus there should be no discrimination against females) and (2) research shows sex differences between males and females. From Festinger's work, we can predict that the tendency will be not to alter their political, ideological beliefs (belief 1), but to rationalize

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

away the findings (idea number 2), just as smokers continue to smoke and rationalize away evidence on the dangers of smoking.

There is much interesting research occurring on sex differences between males and females. Some of it was summarized on the American Broadcasting Company television program, "Boy and Girls Are Different: Men, Women, and the Sex Difference," that aired on February 1, 1995, and was hosted by John Stossel. That research will be discussed here. Of at least equal interest is the response of the three feminists on that program: Gloria Steinem, Gloria Allred, and Bella Abzug. According to Stossel, Steinem believed that research on sex differences should not be done, and Allred believed that a program on sex differences should not be aired. While these views seem anti-research and anti-science, they are not as infrequent as one might hope.

The program also pointed out that some people who try to get grants to study sex differences have been refused funding because the topic is not politically acceptable. Thus, the political views of Steinem and Allred (and Abzug's view that findings reporting sex differences are "poppycock") have support in the real world. One of the women who does research on sex differences was advised by colleagues to avoid the area, due to its being politically incorrect.

There Are Different Feminist Views

The views of the three feminists presented here do not represent all of feminism. As Sommers (1994) pointed out, groups of zealots have taken over much of the feminist movement. Those she calls "gender feminists" seem anti-male and want to portray women as helpless victims of men. Men are the enemy, in this ideology. Further, Sommers says that research findings are misused to support the gender feminists' ideology. The present report is an example of that, in that the three feminists on the program deny valid research on sex differences in order to maintain their ideological belief that there are no sex differences. The research is "misused" in the sense that it is denied. But, as Sommers (1994) mentioned, there are other feminists who want women to have rights, but who do not denigrate men or use research in a dishonest or misleading fashion. She calls these "equity feminists."

In my book *Readings in Psychology* (Eisenman, 1995b) I published four articles critical of feminism. My criticisms stem from the kind of feminists Sommers (1994) condemns, who seem to be the ones with the most power. Since they are the ones fashioning laws and public opinion, they have come in for criticism from me and others (see, for example, good critiques by Levin, 1987 and Farrell, 1994). But it should be noted that other feminists, those whom Sommers (1994) calls "equity feminists," do not seem out to get men or misuse research. The ideals of the original fem-

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

inist movement – equal opportunities for women, freedom from discrimination, etc. – still make sense today.

Eagly on Feminism and Sex Differences

The March 1995 issue of the *American Psychologist* contained an article by Alice Eagly (1995a) that pointed out that recent studies have shown that the assumption that research on sex differences yields only small differences is false. She says that the more recent empirical studies show large sex differences. Many feminists feel such findings of real sex differences weakens their arguments for women's rights. There were three articles in response to Eagly.

Hyde and Plant (1995) state that there is not a single feminist position on sex differences, and that some feminists argue for large sex differences. Marecek (1995) disputed Eagly (1995), saying that feminist theories show that alleged sex differences are often a reflection of interpersonal and institutional realities. Buss (1995) was the only person clearly in support of Eagly, stating that from an evolutionary standpoint there are large sex differences. In her response to the comments, Eagly (1995b) further supported her position and noted that many feminists want no differences found between men and women, in order to support efforts toward equality of treatment.

Hare-Mustin and Marecek (1988) have perhaps best summarized the politically-inspired nature of views on sex differences. They say that there are contrasting biases, with some exaggerating sex differences and others minimizing them. The task, then, for any honest person should be to obtain a correct view, without trying to overemphasize or underemphasize gender differences.

The Relevance of Scientific Research

The emphasis on political correctness rather than scientific validity is an anti-intellectual position. Research helps us understand the world better. Although any one study may be flawed, other research often serves as a corrective, pointing out what was wrong with the earlier work. Science is incremental. One study or several studies may not provide important answers, but as time goes on the addition of many new studies often shows the correct way, dealing with any flaws in the execution or conceptualization of the earlier work. People who do not understand this often think that an individual study is worthless, since it seems to have so many possible alternative explanations. But the individual study contributes to our overall knowledge in an area, and as more studies are done that individual study, seen in the context of the other studies, may be very valuable. To oppose research because it does not fit with one's political views is anti-intellectual. It is also quite possibly short-sighted, as the research may help

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

to show how things are, and thus actually help people in living better lives. Of course, if one is totally opposed to, say, any view that there may be differences between the sexes, or if one feels that any research on sex differences will be used to put down women, then one would, on political grounds, be inclined toward opposition to such research.

Research has shown a relationship between political beliefs and prejudice (Altmeyer, 1988; Eisenman, 1991; Kinder & Sears, 1985; Sears, Lau, Tyler, & Allen, 1980; Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1991; Sniderman & Hagen, 1985). Thus, one's political beliefs may be consistent with or used to support one's prejudice. Ideology is not always objective. People may embrace a viewpoint that represents a political ideology without even realizing it, since the belief may seem attractive, being allegedly based on "equality," "fairness," or other terms which seem reasonable, but which disguise a political ideology (Eisenman, 1995a).

Sex Differences in "Boys and Girls Are Different"

Perhaps one of the most interesting sex differences shown on "Boys and Girls Are Different" was research by Michael Lewis with one-year old boys and girls. He had a barrier put up, such that the child was separated from its mother. The child could see the mother, but was prevented from reaching her. Most boys tried to knock down the barrier, but most girls just stood there and cried.

This finding is consistent with the view of greater aggression or assertion in men, and greater passivity in women. Since the children were only one year old, the results would seem more consistent with a biological explanation than with a socialization explanation, although socialization cannot be entirely ruled out since there was time (one year) for stereotyped sex differences to be imposed.

However, it may be that boys and girls have different ways of adapting to their worlds. This difference could explain why, throughout history, men have tended to obtain political power and to come up with the creative inventions, while women have not often done so. Women's strength may lie more in dealing with people and things in a less aggressive fashion, which could be very valuable in interactions with people or in raising a child. Thus, both the male and female tendencies, if such there are, have value. But to maintain that there is no difference between the sexes, one would have to denigrate any research that shows sex differences. This, of course, is what Steinem, Allred, and Abzug all did.

Another interesting sex difference study was done at the University of Rochester, and showed, according to Stossel, that due to brain differences, men and women navigate differently. Students were blindfolded and walked through a maze of tunnels underneath the campus. Men were quite accurate in maintaining a sense of direction, but women were not. This is

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

consistent with research showing that people with higher masculinity scores tend to do better on visual-spatial tests (and in mathematics) than those who score higher on femininity (Signorella & Jamison, 1986). One can see that some women, or perhaps especially some feminists, would be upset if studies of sex differences constantly seem to favor the men over the women in some skill. But the next study is just the opposite, a study in which the women outperformed the men.

At York University in Canada, male and female students were left alone in a room to await a study. Actually, waiting in the room was part of the study, for when they sat down with the experimenter in another room the students were asked to recall what was in the room. A typical female response (all quotes are from the transcript of the program, which I purchased from Journal Graphics): "On the right-hand side of the desk, right here, was a briefcase with your initials at the top. There was a tube with mitts and a 'I am 40' button on it. In the middle there were envelopes, York University envelopes. There was a thing of Clearasil and a Bazooka joke comic." This was only part of her response, but was all that was shown on the television program. Stossel said "We could let her go on much longer." Contrast that impressive memory performance with that of a typical male student: "I remember Pound Puppies. It was like, right here. I don't have a very good memory, I don't." That is it. The women remembered the room while the men tended not to remember. Since the subjects were not told that they would be quizzed on what was in the room, the memory may have something to do with recalling incidental things, or perhaps it is just general memory ability. In any case, the women far outpaced the men.

Stossel suggested that the brains of men and women may be different, accounting for these and other sex differences. Research with animals supports this view, with emphasis on different hormones produced by male and female brains. For example, Stossel pointed out that at the University of California at Los Angeles, Roger Gorsky found that when female rats were injected with the male hormone testosterone they behaved like males. Both men and women have some of the so-called other sex hormone: men have small amounts of estrogen; women have small amounts of testosterone. But, the differences are so great that it is perhaps valid to speak of testosterone as the male hormone and estrogen as the female hormone.

Stossel further points to research on monkeys at the University of Wisconsin, wherein female monkeys were injected with testosterone and grew up to behave like male monkeys, fighting but not grooming. In both the above-mentioned rat study and in this monkey study, the television program showed the male-like behavior of the testosterone injected females.

Failure to Consider Sex Differences: Haircuts

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

Possibly inspired by feminist rhetoric, attorneys have sued to make hair salons and others who cut hair charge the same amount for men's and women's haircuts. A television program on the subject showed stores that were charging the two sexes different amounts. The attorneys won their suit by arguing that this constituted was illegal discrimination, and likened it to the idea of charging more to cut the hair of black people than that of white people.

But, as Stossel showed via interviews, people who work in these salons say that it is much more work to cut women's hair. Women typically have more hair and it takes longer to do. Also, women are more critical, say the hair cutters, which again makes cutting their hair a more difficult task. When Stossel tried to discuss this with Gloria Allred, she was adamant that law suits would be used to enforce the absence of different treatment of men and women. She came across as angry and insensitive.

My daughter, Susan, has a perspective on this hair-splitting issue that seems to make sense. She resents being charged more, since she has relatively short hair. She says that the charge should be based on the amount of work required. Thus, most women would pay more, but women with short hair would pay less. Men with long hair would pay more. This would seem to be a fairer standard, given that there are often differences in hair length. But we may doubt that any of the three feminists interviewed on the television program would accept such a position. They seem to have a political agenda of getting more things for women, and denying any sex differences, that would lead them to side with the above mentioned attorneys and reject all other views.

According to June Reinisch

John Stossel cited a list prepared by June Reinisch, head of the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University, documenting early behavioral differences in infants. such as the fact that girls sit up without support earlier than boys do. However, boys crawl away from their caretaker earlier than girls. Male infants startle more readily than female infants. Female infants rhythmically mouth more than male infants; that is, they suck on their tongues, move their lips, etc. She added "Men and women are not the same."

While it is not clear what all this means (males do some things more than females, and vice versa) the findings cited by Reinisch do suggest, as Stossel said, "So, could it be that when we treat kids differently, cuddle the girls, toss the boys into the air, that we're not just being sexist? Maybe we're responding to the inborn cues from the kids."

Stossel then went on to say that if there is an in-born difference between boys and girls, it should show up in the brains, and cited the work of Laura Allen, who has been studying brain tissue of the two sexes at the University of California at Los Angeles. He quoted her as saying that: "As

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

I began to look at the human brain more and more, I kept finding differences, and about 7 or 8 out of the 10 structures that we actually measured turned out to be different between men and women."

Toy Companies: Reality from the Marketplace

Toy companies have an incentive to do whatever will sell. They are large corporations, out to make money. Gloria Steinem complained of parents inducing sex differences and said "We badly need to raise our boys more like our girls." Bella Abzug was asked by Stossel, "If society weren't sexist, the kids would do roughly the same? The boys would nurture the dolls?" Abzug said "I think so. I think it would be very much more interchangeable." Stossel then asked, "What about those who say there are biological differences" and Abzug said, "Well, I think that's a lot of poppycock."

The findings of toy companies is that even when they try to get children to buy the toys preferred by the opposite sex, they do not succeed. They would make a lot of money if toys were popular with both sexes, instead of toy A appealing to boys and toy B appealing to girls. But, their efforts to market toys to both sexes have not been effective. The consumers, the boys and the girls, want different toys. Advertising Age columnist Kate Fitzgerald said "What you see on the shelves is the reality of what has worked. Girls tend to want dolls, girls want pink, girls are more concerned with the relationships between the characters. Girls want to talk and play and be together. The toy companies have lost millions of dollars in testing and manufacturing toys that they thought would win over the opposite gender. They only respond to what kids want."

Biology as an Explanation as Opposed to Social Learning

The description of girls' preferences by Fitzgerald fits with sex differences alleged by Wilson (1992) in his sociobiological theory to be evolutionary. He says that females tend to be higher than males in empathy, verbal skills, social skills and security-seeking, among other things, while men tend to be higher in independence, dominance, spatial and mathematical skills, rank-related aggression, and other characteristics. So from this perspective it would make sense that girls would want a doll family, and to play with them as though they were interacting with each other, while boys would prefer soldiers, who fight to see who will come out on top. Not only do these choices fit with alleged biological predispositions, but they also prepare children for their future roles in society. Feminists, taking a social learning perspective, have often argued that such societal roles are due to what children are taught. Wilson (1992) and others of a biological orientation would argue that such societal roles are the normal outcome of innate biological differences between males and females. Wilson's small book is

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

filled with evidence to support his biological model of sex differences and to refute the social learning model.

Since most people have not heard of the biological view, and have been exposed, at most, to a social learning explanation, Wilson's (1992) book is recommended as an antidote to a limited way of looking at sex differences. Of course, a strictly biological view that fails to consider the way society influences behavior would also be limited.

Funny and Sad

Why Gloria Steinem Endorses Female Firefighters Part of the program "Boys and Girls Are Different" dealt with the efforts to have equality in hiring, such that hiring rules that limit a job mostly to one sex cannot be used. For example, many fire fighter jobs require some exhibition of physical abilities, such as chopping wood, climbing over a wall, and carrying a fire hose, before one can be hired. But since women tend to do worse than men on these tasks, there is a move to prevent fire companies from using these tasks for hiring purposes. One female fire fighter who was strong enough to pass the tests said she did not want to work with women who could not pass them, as they would be a hazard to her and the other fire-fighters, as well as to the people they are trying to save.

Gloria Steinem, like many feminists and others who believe in mandated equality (not just equal opportunity; see Eisenman, 1995a), wants women to be hired just as much as men, and thus objects to any pre-employment screening that results in most women not passing. When confronted with the argument that many women are not strong enough to carry injured people out of a burning building, she gave a response which was both funny and sad. It was suggested that such women could only drag injured or unconscious people down the stairs, pulling them by their ankles, which could lead to head injuries, as Cato Burn, a scholar at the Heritage Foundation, pointed out. However, Steinem, trying to defend the hiring of female firefighters, said, "It's better to drag them out, because there is less smoke down there. I mean, we're probably killing people by carrying them out at that height, you know, so – I mean, you know, we need to look sensibly here at these jobs and what they really require, and not just some idea of what macho is." Some of my students laughed when she said that. It seemed like an obvious rationalization to defend her viewpoint, even when there is an argument that defeats it.

This rationalizing would be consistent with Festinger's (1957) view that when we are presented with two views, dissonance is introduced, which is uncomfortable. People try to achieve consonance by rationalizing away one of the views. Thus, a smoker has cognitive dissonance from the views (1) I smoke and (2) smoking is dangerous. The most rational response would be to stop smoking, but people are more likely to rationalize away

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

the dangers of smoking. Thus, they can still smoke, but without the cognitive dissonance of thinking that smoking is dangerous.

Two Kinds of Discrimination

Steinem wants women hired as firefighters, and when evidence suggests that the discrimination in hiring may be valid, she comes up with a rather bizarre argument about how it is better not to lift up people when carrying them out of a burning building. An important point is that discrimination is not necessarily bad. We have heard the word "discrimination" used so often in civil rights cases in a negative way, that we may fail to see its other usage as a positive thing, as when a test validly discriminates between who can do the work and who cannot. This is the good kind of discrimination, on a par with saying that a wine connoisseur has a discriminating taste for wines.

The EEOC Lawsuit Against Sears

The idea that any discrimination is bad has led to harmful results. For example, Stossel pointed out the case of Sears and the lawsuit against them by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. "Been to Sears lately?" asked Stossel. He said, "If you buy something here [at Sears] you should know that some of your dollar goes to pay for years of litigation between Sears and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The EEOC apparently found out that more male than female sales clerks at Sears earn big commissions, apparently due to more men than women working in such departments as lawnmowers and appliances. The EEOC took the evidence of different sales figures, and different sexes tending to work in different departments, as evidence that Sears discriminated against women. The lawsuit lasted for years and cost \$20 million, according to Stossel. Sears said, in effect, (quoting Stossel) "We didn't discriminate. We asked women to do all those jobs. It's just that few women want to sell things like lawnmowers." According to Stossel, "After the EEOC was unable to produce any women who said they'd been discriminated against, Sears won the suit. The \$20 million the litigation cost will be passed on to us customers."

Sports and "Discrimination"

This reminds me of an event that happened several months after the program. A federal judge held that Brown University is guilty of sex discrimination because, even though it provides an equal number of intercollegiate athletic programs for male and female students, there are fewer women in the female sports programs. Thus, Brown was found to be discriminating on the basis of Title IX, that says that universities may not discriminate on the basis of sex. Many universities are having a problem with

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

Title IX, since more men than women are typically interested in playing collegiate sports, more fans are interested in the male sports, and, especially because of football, more money is thus spent on the male sports. Also, it is typically only some of the male sports that produce revenue for the school (although the high costs of such sports as football or basketball means that few sports really wind up making money, if the costs are taken into account, except in the instances of big-time athletic programs that receive large donations from alumni).

I have heard horror stories of how women's sports used to be the step sister, receiving little in the way of support, relative to the men's sports. For example, while one university's men's basketball team got to stay at nice hotels, the women's basketball team had to stay at cheaper motels and sleep two to a bed. The university did not give them enough money for each women basketball player to have her own bed. Such things need correction. But, to say that everything has to be equal is to go against both the reality of how much men value competitive sports as opposed to women, and how little fan interest there is in women's sports. Perhaps men like to participate in competitive collegiate sports because they are responding to their greater physical strength, which makes them more interested in using that strength in a sport, and also due to the alleged male need for dominance and rank (Wilson, 1992). The nature of most sports would seem less consistent with the observed female interests in such things as interpersonal communication, taking care of children, or verbal skills, to name a few. All of those things are of limited use in the fast action of most competitive collegiate sports. Communication is obviously needed in sport, but the kind of deep interpersonal communication favored by women is not what is needed, but rather something to help you quickly establish dominance over an opponent.

Who Gets Custody of the Child?

An interesting point emerged when Stossel mentioned that perhaps, over the centuries, women have shown more interest in child rearing than have men. This would be the view of Helen Fisher, an anthropologist, who believes that sex differences evolved over millions of years, as men and women did different things, and thus the successful men and women who survived passed on genes for different kinds of behaviors. For example, women are less likely to abandon their child than are men. Perhaps this is another sex difference, and consistent with the early woman caring for the child while the man was out hunting, and also consistent with the tendency of courts to award child custody to the wife and not the husband.

However, when Stossel interviewed men's rights activists on the issue of who the courts tend to give the child to, the roles were reversed, with the men's rights activists sounding like the three feminists, and arguing against

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

sex differences. Consider the following exchange between Stossel and two men's rights activists, Richard Bogash and Sidney Siller:

Stossel: Aren't women better mothers, better nurturers? Bogash: Fathers and mothers are both equally good parents. Stossel: Evolution shows that women have done most of the mothering? Siller: That is not – that is not – that is a myth. That is a myth.

Hostility or Ignorance of Research

When some people wish to speak from a political position regarding the rights of their gender, it seems convenient to overlook or denigrate research, if it leads to conclusions not consistent with one's bias. This is, however, a very anti-intellectual way to think. But apparently some feminists such as Steinem, Allred, and Abzug are so imbedded into their ideology that they will not entertain any research findings that do not support what they already believe.

Another possibility is that they are either ignorant of research methods in general, or are simply ignorant of the specific research that is done on sex differences. Perhaps these feminists, and others devoted to equality, have no real sense of how the scientific method operates to help us understand our world. But they do have a political ideology. Lacking any real understanding of how hypotheses are tested, and supported or not supported, how research is incremental and builds on past research, etc., such people ignore research, except when they hear of findings that support what they already believe. They would never concede that perhaps a biological explanation is superior to a social-learning explanation to account for something that they had conceptualized as being environmentally caused.

How the Feminists Came Across on the TV Show

The three feminists came across badly on the television program. Largely, this was due to their views: their refusal to accept research. However, part of it could have been due to how they were presented. Gloria Allred seemed constantly angry, and her desire to have constant lawsuits seemed absurd. But, television programs can often make you look how they want. Perhaps some of her anger was due to topics discussed but not the specific ones shown. Some of her advocacy of lawsuits may have been a general point, not specific to what was being discussed. For example, to show that a lawsuit seems absurd in a specific instance, and then to interview Allred about lawsuits and have her speaking in favor of them, makes it seem like she advocates a lawsuit in the absurd case. I got the feeling this was being done to her, due to the way the program was edited, which showed certain things, and then had a general statement from her, in response to a general question from Stossel.

MISOGYNY UNLIMITED

If I am correct, then she was treated unfairly, and made to appear to communicate things she was not really communicating. In defense of the program, Allred is an attorney and seems to be very much in favor of lawsuits. Like Steinem and Abzug, she also favors the view that men and women are the same, and considers any evidence to the contrary to be misleading and harmful. As I mentioned at the beginning, according to Stossel, Steinem argued that no research should be conducted into sex differences, and Allred believed that such research as had been conducted should not be publicized on TV.

Steinem came across as a rigid person who would not consider any idea inconsistent with her ideology. Her defense of female fire fighters who are not able to carry out victims was a telling point. Although not as overtly angry as Allred, she seemed sarcastic at times, as when she told Stossel she could smell sexism better than he could, in response to his saying that research showed that women have a better sense of smell than men. This might have appealed to those who support her, but it failed to deal with Stossel's point, and just put him down and avoided the issue.

Abzug seemed like a pleasant person, but one totally ignorant of research on sex differences, and perhaps ignorant of research in general. Of course, most people know little or nothing about research, but when one is in the public policy arena, there is some obligation to understand relevant findings and not be close-minded about them.

One problem for feminism, besides the specific content of their ideology, has been that nonfeminists perceive them as not very appealing people. Feminists are fond of saying that the media portray them as hairy-armed, unattractive women (Wolf, 1993). But there is also the accurate negative perception if one comes across rigid and sarcastic (Steinem on the program) or constantly angry (Allred on the program).

There are feminists who do research, as well as those who follow the research literature. The picture of anti-research bias presented above is either (a) a function of the three specific feminists studied or (b) the stance they took when the research went against their beliefs. Perhaps they know a little research, and selectively report it to further their goals.

Further Thoughts

Do the brains of males and females really differ, resulting in very different behavior? A very readable book on the biology of sex differences is that of Moir and Jessel (1991), who record the observed brain differences. A more cautious approach is presented by Springer and Deutsch (1994). A useful discussion of psychological perspectives on gender can be found in Brannon (1995), a feminist who emphasizes social influence more than biological causes.

THE THINKING MAN'S MINEFIELD 2001-2013

Steinem (1986) has published a very readable memoir of her involvement in the feminist movement. On the back cover of the paperback edition, actor Alan Alda is quoted as saying, "Her book is like the woman herself: intelligent, concerned, articulate, precise, and never without a sense of balance." However, this is not the way I felt she or the other two feminists came across on the television program "Boys and Girls Are Different." It would be interesting to understand why.¹⁵⁶

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